june 1992

RePlay

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HOT OFF THE PRESS!

JAMMA'S NEW PREXY — The Japan Amusement Machinery Assn. has a new president. Sega Japan prexy **Hayao Nakayama** was named to the post during JAMMA's annual board meeting, held May 13. Mr. Nakayama becomes only the second man to serve as JAMMA president. At presstime, we had no word about Mr. Nakayama's specific plans or priorities for JAMMA.

NAKAMURA'S NEW POST — Namco Ltd. founder and chairman **Masaya Nakamura** was JAMMA's first and only president during the trade association's first 11 years (1991-1992). As president, Mr. Nakamura succeeded in having the highest levels of Japan's government recognize coin-op as an important and valuable industry. He also got Japan's copyright law applied to video games; and he brought JAMMA to its present level of worldwide industry leadership.

For over a year, Mr. Nakamura had been saying he felt it was time for a successor to take JAMMA's reins. At the board meeting, JAMMA decided to create a brand-new post for Mr. Nakamura: "Honorary President." When confirmed, the new post will be a lifetime appointment. (Since JAMMA is a non-profit trade association, creation of this office requires a change in JAMMA's charter which must be approved by Japan's government. Insiders expect approval soon.) It is understood that Mr. Nakamura's new post will entail specific responsibilities, allowing him to continue his recent work against counterfeits worldwide. Mr. Nakamura will also continue his recent efforts to build and solidify JAMMA's international relationships with other trade associations like AMOA, AAMA and Euromat. Mr. Nakamura said he was "very pleased" with the new arrangements.

KONAMI'S NEW TEAM — After five years as president of Konami Co. Ltd. (Japan), **Fumihiro Hishikawa,** 67, has been named honorary chairman of the firm (a non-officer position). Named as new Konami Japan president was **Yasuo Nishimura,** 53, who had previously served as managing director. This according to Japan's *Game Machine Magazine,* which said the changes would be confirmed officially at a board meeting sometime soon after May 28.

Back in Elk Grove, Ill., Konami, Inc. president **Susumu Sakamoto** has an additional "hat" to wear: he's been named to the Konami Japan board of directors. President Sakamoto also announced the appointment of Mr. **Kenji Hiraoka** as the U.S. subsidiary's new exec VP. Hiraoka, an 11-year company veteran, replaces Mr. Hitoshi Omikawa who is returning to Japan after completing his three-year assignment in the USA. Hiraoka previously served as Konami's overseas department deputy director. As exec VP, he will oversee Konami, Inc.'s sales, marketing, operations and credit.

CONFUSED DEBATE raged in Wisconsin's government through May 21 over proposed laws to stop gambling growth (no VLTs, etc.). Nobody seemed to agree how (or if) such laws could affect Indian casinos. The debate is over till after fall elections; then anything could happen.

MIXED SIGNALS — Video lottery in Canada's province of Ontario has been ruled out for now, but **Angela Zigras,** president of the Coin Operators Lottery Assn. of Ontario, (COLA) suspects the reprieve is only temporary. Her belief is based on conflicting government statements. On Monday, May 11, the Minister of Tourism & Recreation told lawmakers: "The government has no intention of going ahead with VLTs at this time." But on Budget Day, treasury officials pointedly told COLA that, rather than ruling out VLTs, "no decision" had been made about them. COLA believes the government will focus on casinos long enough to get them up and running, then consider VLTs. Noting that Saskatchewan's budget announced the introduction of video lottery, Zigras said: "We do not think Ontario will likely hold out for long. When the issue is reopened, COLA will be ready." COLA's growing membership (now nearly 100 strong) opposes VLTs; but if VLTs must exist, COLA wants operators involved.

LATIN AMERICAN MARKET — Sega Enterprises (USA) has named **R.H. Belam Co., Inc.** as their exclusive "amusement video arcade" distributor for South America, Central America and the Caribbean Islands. Belam's been active in the Latin American market for over 40 years, the past 20 as the region's leading coin-op supplier operating in six different countries, said Sega. . . .**Williams Electronics** has appointed **Betson Enterprises** as the only authorized U.S. distributorship to market and service their coin-op games in South America, citing Betson's years-long sales record there.

RePlay

the Players' Choice

JUNE 1992

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

best upright videos

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
■	1	**STREET FIGHTER II: C E (Capcom) (2)**	**9.66**	**72%**
■	2	TERMINATOR 2 (Midway) (7)	9.09	66%
	3	SUNSET RIDERS+ (Konami) (8)	7.93	50%
■	4	DOUBLE AXLE★ (Taito) (8)	7.72	28%
■	5	STEEL GUNNER+ (Namco) (11)	7.56	14%
■	6	SUPER HIGH IMPACT (Midway) (8)	7.45	41%
	7	SPACE GUN (Taito) (18)	7.29	18%
■	8	CAPTAIN AMERICA+ (Data East) (8)	7.28	58%
	9	S.C.I. (Taito) (23)	7.03	31%
	10	BEAST BUSTERS (SNK) (19)	7.00	16%

+ 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	**X-MEN (Konami) (2)**	**9.52**	**37%**
■	2	STEEL TALONS (Atari) (9)	9.08	23%
	3	RACE DRIVIN'★ (Atari) (20)	8.30	49%
	4	HARD DRIVIN'★ (Atari) (39)	8.22	32%
	5	GALAXY FORCE (Sega) (23)	8.19	14%
	6	CISCO HEAT★ (Jaleco) (11)	8.18	10%
■	7	MAD DOG+ (Betson/ALG) (11)	7.92	10%
	8	FINAL LAP 2 (Namco) (13)	7.88	15%
■	9	ROAD RIOT+ (Atari) (11)	7.72	28%
	10	FINAL LAP (Atari) (39)	7.70	23%

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

best new videos

■	1	GRAND PRIX STAR [del. s/d] (Jaleco)	8.67
■	2	EXHAUST NOTE [del. s/d] (Sega)	8.00

best video software

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
	1	**STREET FIGHTER II [H] (Capcom) (15)**	**9.15**	**93%**
■	2	RELIEF PITCHER [H] (Atari) (2)	8.12	15%
■	3	KNIGHTS OF ROUND [H] (Capcom) (3)	8.00	20%
■	4	TOTAL CARNAGE [H] (Midway) (2)	7.94	15%
■	5	RIM ROCKIN' B-BALL [H] (Strata) (5)	7.93	36%
■	6	WRESTLEFEST [H] (Technos) (9)	7.90	72%
■	7	STEEL GUNNER 2 [R] (Namco) (1)	7.86	6%
■	8	FATAL FURY [S] (SNK) (5)	7.83	70%
■	9	BASEBALL STARS 2 [S] (SNK) (2)	7.81	18%
■	10	NINJA COMMANDO [S] (SNK) (1)	7.78	8%
■	11	TURTLES II [H] (Konami) (4)	7.57	39%
	12	RAIDEN [V] (Fabtek) (22)	7.38	34%
■	13	MUTATION NATION [S] (SNK) (3)	7.37	24%
■	14	SILENT DRAGON [H] (Taito) (1)	7.33	5%
■	15	KING OF DRAGONS [S] (Romstar) (5)	7.29	12%
■	16	LAST RESORT [S] (SNK) (1)	7.06	14%
	17	OFF ROAD TRAK PAK [R] (Leland) (23)	6.94	44%
	18	CLUTCH HITTER [H] (Sega) (12)	6.87	33%
■	19	SUPER BASEBALL 2020 [S] (SNK) (9)	6.84	32%
	20	FINAL FIGHT [H] (Capcom) (28)	6.73	85%

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

top pinballs

■	1	**ADDAMS FAMILY (Midway) (4)**	**9.09**	**70%**
■	2	TERMINATOR 2 (Williams) (11)	9.05	83%
■	3	GETAWAY (Williams) (2)	8.90	33%
	4	THE MACHINE (Williams) (14)	8.24	44%
	5	HURRICANE (Williams) (4)	8.16	33%
	6	SURF 'N SAFARI (Gottlieb/Premier) (6)	8.10	11%
	7	FUN HOUSE (Williams) (18)	8.04	75%
■	8	HOOK (Data East) (3)	7.97	39%
	9	STAR TREK (Data East) (6)	7.73	44%
■	10	SUPER MARIO BROS. (Gott./Prem.) (1)	7.71	8%

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

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

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



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RePlay magazine

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COVER

The company on our June cover is Coin Concepts, Inc. The firm has been around for just about four years, but founder and president Art Warner (whose likeness beams from above the game line-up in the cover shot) is a man of over 20 years' experience with redemption. As for CCI, it was one of the first to call itself a "redemption one-stop" and the name fits: from their New Jersey facility, they create, design, test, market, sell, service and support their own broad line of homegrown games, as well as importing and revamping good redemption product from overseas. Sales staff shown with CCI's latest games are, from left, Gary Warner, Carl De Venio and Stacey Martin. The charming kids are Gary's nephew Scott Kraus and nieces Rachel & Stefani Boydman.

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EDITORIAL

All through coin-op's tough times of recent years, arcades and redemption have provided exceptional success stories. Indeed, their stories are closely intertwined. Redemption has succeeded mainly in arcades, first in the U.S. and now around the world. Arcades, on the other hand, owe much of their success to an expanded player base. . . which was often achieved by redemption. This issue brings more good news from some of the oldest and newest redemption factories and arcade chains.

Now that the economy is (slowly) coming back, machine sales and earnings are picking up, too. Not surprisingly, redemption and arcades are leading coin-op's economic recovery as well. This year began with exhibitors in London smiling, because an unusually high number of "hungry" U.S. arcade chiefs visited the ATEI show. Spring continued the trend, with redemption taking center stage at ACME. As summer arrives, another major video factory has decided to offer redemption goods.

Our own trade isn't alone in noticing the success of redemption and arcades. Last year, a couple of new trade shows pulled in new faces and new investors from other industries. Many of these people are now busy running successful "pocket parks" — sites combining coin-op amusements with a major attraction like miniature golf, go-karts, water slides, roller skating, etc. The better arcades are upgrading to approach amusement park quality, and we salute the prophet who forecast this trend: Skip Doyle. We also salute the many redemption factories and experts who helped make Skip's prediction come true.

The arcade of the future is already arriving overseas. In the Orient, top arcades now rival theme parks with games that approach the biggest rides in thrills and sophistication. In Britain, super-sophisticated simulators are helping redefine the arcade experience. Ultra-hi tech has been slower to arrive in U.S. arcades, but this will happen as costs come down. By the 21st century, the typical arcade may combine sci-fi "you are there" reality simulations, with old-fashioned skill games that update the simple appeal of 1910-era carnivals and state fairs. The partnership between arcades and redemption looks like a permanent success.

— Marcus Webb



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INSIDE

JUNE 1992

SPECIAL ARTICLES

CAPCOM PRO & CON

Players are pumping quarters into *Street Fighter II Champion Edition* as fast as they can, but parallels are having a noticeable effect on U.S. distribution. Two major U.S. dealers are selling parallels themselves, in fact. The anatomy of a hit, and a candid look begins on . . . . . pg. 39

REDEMPTION & ARCADES

Redemption is fastest-growing market segment in American coin-op. It's powering arcades to new growth and inviting factories to new creativity. Read our special report from arcade operators, redemption factories, and an expert distributor . . . . . pg. 73

ATARI: YEAR 21

The video factory that started it all finished its 20th year with a blowout distributor meeting and party on the French Riviera. We have the ooh-la-la from France, followed by a nostalgic look back at two decades of Atari history . . . . . pg. 58

SNK'S BIG PLANS

Having finished their move down to Southern California, the gang at SNK is looking ahead with ambitious plans to double their market share in a single year. They're still totally committed to Neo-Geo; a hot fighting game is coming this summer . . . . pg. 148

REGULAR FEATURES

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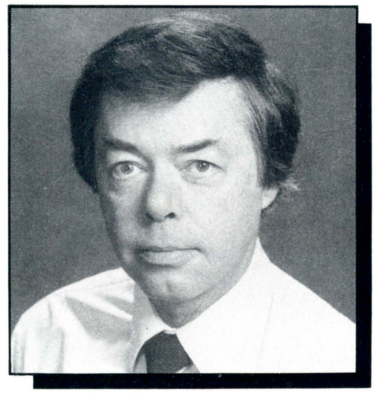

This issue of the magazine puts the spotlight on the game center . . . a place I still call an "arcade" even though a lot of "arcades" in business today make those old storefront joints I remember as a kid, look rather weak by comparison. But there was pure magic in those "joints" to this kid. The romance of all those novelties, all in one place, supervised by "the old guy with the gray change belt," really was magic and magic is what kids dream about.

Lots of kids dream about mom and dad taking them to one of our centers today, and parents aren't against the idea as much as they used to be because nowadays, good family centers offer entertainment for them as well. On our side, a lot of street operators who don't run full-blown family centers (with all the redemption games, quality video attractions, etc.) dream about starting one up themselves. But dreams are one thing. Doing the footwork to make it happen is another.

Getting a true family fun center into existence requires a load of planning, money and hard work. On a smaller scale, it's like redoing your kitchen at home . . . turning yesterday's eyesore into a modern, functional room with all the new appliances right there in the right place. Like setting up a family arcade, it's a daunting chore. But if that's your dream and it's strong enough to "force" you to follow through, the end result can be an enormous source of personal pride and (in the case of a family fun center) of big bucks as well.

Where do you start? Just like with a kitchen . . . by looking at what other people did before you, catching some good ideas and adding a lot of your own. It's not nice, nor hardly creative, to copy someone else's plan. But viewing examples of what's already been completed (and talking with owner/operators about what worked and didn't work for them), is a great starting point. Put in your own personalized touches (a theme, for example) and your own selection of machines displayed your own way, and you've got "your" family center. And remember: making money is only part of it . . . the enjoyment you'll see on customer faces is another.

— Ed Adlum

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VIEWPOINTS

REMEMBRANCE OF JOHNNY BILOTA

Dear Eddie:

I was grieved to learn in *RePlay* about the passing of John Bilotta. Like for you, he was also "Uncle John" to me. It was John Bilotta back in 1966 who encouraged two brothers (Bill and David Nutting) to bring their coin-operated games to market. Bill returned to California, created Nutting Associates and produced *Computer Quiz.* I created Nutting Industries and produced the *I.Q. Computer.*

Bill went on to create the first coin-operated video game, *Computer Space,* with Nolan Bushnell, while I went on and created the first computer-



driven pinball machine. Every pinball built after 1976 employs features covered in my patent.

Uncle John became my mentor. He literally taught me the coin machine business. At the 1969 MOA show, he put his arm around me and said "Dave, you have learned well. You are now a coin man." Ever since that day, I've dedicated my life's work to the amusement machine industry.

Beginning with the *I.Q. Computer,* I have designed and placed into production 52 games resulting in 95,000 machines built, generating over $200 million of product and over $1 billion in revenue for the operator. Without Uncle John's enthusiastic support, I'm not sure all of this would have happened.

I was looking for Johnny at the ACME convention to show him my latest game system. I learned he'd died only days before the convention opened. I've been developing that new system for the past several years and it will generate a whole new series of exciting games. We'll launch our first one at the AMOA show in Nashville.

I've created a new company called Dave Nutting Games and I expect this new game system to generate another billion in revenue for operators. So, Uncle John, the legacy goes on. We all miss you.

Yours Truly,
David Nutting
Dave Nutting Associates
Ridgway, Colorado

[When he's not inventing new amusement games, Dave Nutting designs and builds experimental helicopters. The one he shows off above is his latest called Tiger Shark! *Dave's designed some 52 amusements and wonders if there's anyone in the world who can match that number. — RePlay]*

OPERATING FAIRNESS

Dear RePlay:

I'm a street location operator running about 1,500 pieces in a major metropolitan area. I buy from my local distributors and either pay cash or on our normal trade credit terms.

The reason I write is that I find myself at an increasingly competitive disadvantage today against some larger operators who I will refer to as "inferior" operators. The advantage they have over me is that they are bigger and buy their games direct from the factories and never pay their bills. That way they owe the factories a lot of money and the factories carry them in hopes they'll be able to get their money back some day.

I think these factories are short-sighted. In the long run, they'll end up more and more doing business with the worst operators. If these factories continue to sell direct, bypassing their own distributors, and give more liberal credit terms to the "inferior" big operators than to their own distributors, then the customers of those distributors are put increasingly at a competitive disadvantage.

These factories are obviously thinking that if they don't give the deadbeats the hot games, then the deadbeats will go out of business, owing them millions. They should develop some guts and face up to the fact that selling directly to "inferior" routes and credit deadbeats is only keeping these people alive for a little while more to the disadvantage of the healthy street operators who buy through distributors.

Isn't it insane that some of the people who produce games for our industry are subsidizing and support-

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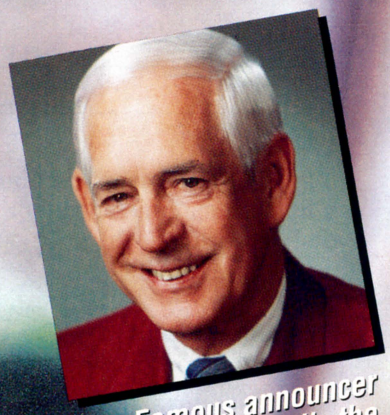

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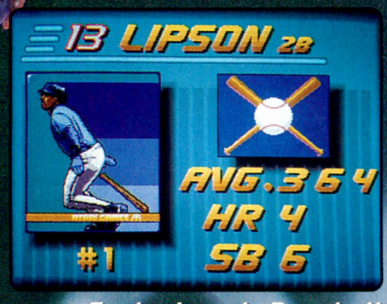

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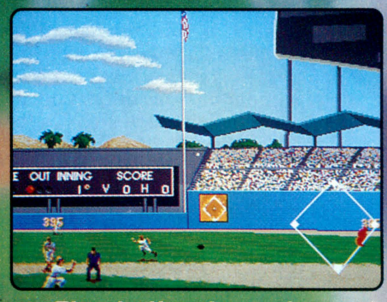

Five ballparks make each game a new experience!

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ing the worst operators (those who can't pay their bills) and making it tougher and tougher for both the distributors and the good operators to survive?

Anonymous

[Dear anonymous: since your cover letter demanded anonymity, we took the liberty of "sanitizing" your message a bit because if we listed people you are castigating, those people would have a right to know their accuser. However, your angst comes through rather clearly, and even though the message is sort of "in code," anyone possibly responsible for the affairs you mention should harken to it. — RePlay]

DISTRIBUTION FAIRNESS

Dear RePlay:

Everyone is aware that the two major pinball companies and a couple of video companies have established exclusive distributors in major markets. What this accomplishes is the following: the distributors, in many cases, are able to raise their prices on a good game above retail. Secondly, in order to buy a good game, some distributors force you to purchase a lesser-earning game with it, a clear violation of the law. One distributor made you go on a program where you had to buy a certain number of pinballs per year, good or bad, in order to get a good price.

Now we find one major distributor has seen fit to import parallel boards of *Street Fighter II Champion Edition* and sell them, because other distributors have the exclusive rights to the Capcom line in a major market. Does this mean this distributor is above the same rules operators are asked to abide by? If an operator seeks out a lower price on a game from a distributor in another state, that distributor is threatened with the loss of the pinball line by the major manufacturer if caught shipping games to another state.

Would it not seem fair for a manufacturer to pull his line or take away the exclusive, if his distributors are bringing in product from another distributor of a line he does not represent, or if his distributors are selling parallel boards of a line they do not represent? We realize parallel boards are legal, but does this seem right?

Sincerely,
Jerry Monday, President
Century Vending & Distributing
Gardena, California

[Dear Jerry: as you noted, parallels have been legal since Dec. 1, 1991. What's illegal is if a distributor or operator sells counterfeit games or uses trademarked graphics, game names, etc. without authorization. Capcom's decision to sell Champion Edition *as a dedicated game to the U.S. has created some major "irregularities" in distribution. We can't blame you for feeling caught in the middle. However, we don't think it's reasonable to expect "Factory A" to try to enforce anybody's idea of morality upon their dealers, based on how those dealers treat "Factory B's" line. That would be mixing apples and oranges. The question is, what is the "new reality" of distribution, and how should operators and dealers respond? The data on that one is still coming in. We don't know* ***anybody*** *who thinks it's easy or who is entirely happy about all this. — RePlay]*

ADDRESS US, TOO!

To RePlay Magazine:

The most frustrating aspect in this business is the archaic attitude that women are not involved (in it). As an arcade owner, I resent mail being addressed to me as "good day, **gentlemen.**" I think it's time to modernize your attitudes.

Lady in Minneapolis

[Dear lady: sorry, it did say that on our Game Center Questionnaire (which you were kind enough to complete and return despite your resentment). It's an old habit to address mail as "dear sir" and "gentlemen," but we appreciate your nudge to get with modern times. ed.]

SALUTE TO C.A. ROBINSON

Dear RePlay:

For operators who are uncertain about the importance of which distributor they purchase their equipment from, I offer the following story. On Thursday morning, April 30th, I contacted the parts department of C.A. Robinson & Co. (downtown Los Angeles) to inform them of a bad part on an important game in our Marina Del Ray amusement center. With the violence and fires that had begun the previous night, I was surprised they were even open for business that day.

I was told that the factory had not yet shipped them replacement parts for this recently-released game. They offered to take the part out of their showroom demonstration game and exchange it with ours, but suggested it would be unsafe for me to drive to their location. The part would be sent via Federal Express overnight delivery.

Throughout the rest of that day, I watched the television as looting and fires spread north to eventually surround their location. At the close of the day, I received a call from them informing me that no delivery company would enter their area, but they had sent one of their salesmen to hand-deliver the part to us by 5PM. The remaining staff was fighting arson attempts on their building.

As I write this letter (May 2), I am still uncertain as to the fate of their building. I pray that the Bettelman family and all of their employees are safe. At a time when it might be tempting to shop around or purchase by mail, C.A. Robinson & Co. continues to emphasize the importance of the distributor's role in our industry. They have earned my support.

Sincerely,
Steven D. Sogn
Westworld
Marina Del Ray, California

[Dear Steven: C.A. Robinson and the city's other distributors and their people all came through safe and sound. Unfortunately, L.A. operators lost over $1 million in equipment, and many locations were burned to the ground (see story inside). And yes, C.A. Robinson does pride itself on professionalism and commitment to its customers. — RePlay]

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NEWS DIGEST

AMOA EXPO '92 SOLD OUT! 742 BOOTHS FOR NASHVILLE

AMOA EXPO '92 Nashville

OCTOBER 1-3, OPRYLAND HOTEL

The Amusement & Music Operators Association International Exhibition & Educational Seminar for the Coin-Operated Amusement, Music & Vending Industry

All 742 exhibit booths for AMOA Expo '92 (Oct. 1-3, Nashville) were sold out as of mid-May, five months before the show. The industry's biggest annual trade show takes place this year at the famed Opryland Hotel complex and over 175 companies have the exhibit space rented. Firms that want to get on the exhibitor waiting list must have exhibit applications and deposit on file at AMOA headquarters, said the association. Registration, housing and program information is now mailing to trade members worldwide. For more information, contact **Susan Gilbert** at AMOA. Phone is 312/245-1021 and the fax is 312-321-6869.

OVER $1 MILLION WORTH OF GAMES LOST IN L.A. RIOTS



Conservative estimates are that operators sustained well over $1 million in equipment and merchandise losses during the L.A. riots April 30-May 2. From an arcade in Pasadena to liquor stores, grocery marts and C-stores downtown, looters smashed, trashed, burned and even stole video games, cranes and redemption merchandise. Fortunately, L.A.'s three distributors came through fine (although there was a close call for C.A. Robinson). See the dramatic photos and read first-hand accounts from operators and dealers, starting on **page 48.**

HONG KONG COPS GRAB VIDEO COPIES

Some 552 **counterfeit video PCBs** (worth an estimated $1.3 million) were seized in **Hong Kong** for the first time in May, according to an article in the *South China Morning Post.* U.S. Customs had complained of copyright infringement. The paper said seven companies, seven arcades and one private apartment were searched during the two-day operation. Eight people were arrested (mostly Chinese and a couple of Koreans) then released on bail pending further investigation. Officials of the Intellectual Property Bureau said they believed the phony games were made in Taiwan, then shipped to Hong Kong for use in arcades and shipment to the USA. The most copied game, of course, was *Street Fighter.* As we went to press, Capcom USA announced the arrests resulted from its worldwide enforcement program. The firm predicted a "wave of similar seizures and prosecutions." According to AAMA Exec VP **Bob Fay,** such action could come in "Southeast Asia, Mexico or South America."

CAPCOM *CHAMPION EDITION* CAUSES JOY & HEARTACHES

Operators are hailing Capcom's ***Street Fighter II Champion Edition*** as "the game of the decade" and smiling at the hefty earnings. "This is not just a game," Capcom USA said, "as far as players are concerned, it's a cult!" The game is also providing the trade's first "test case" of a dedicated mega-hit in the era of legal parallels. The result: all kinds of "irregularities" in supply, including sale of parallels by two of the country's largest and most respected distributors. We examine the "agony and the ecstasy" of this hot game in two related stories, beginning on **page 39.**





NEW ROWE BOX IS SHIPPING! OFFICIAL DEBUT HITS JUNE 6



Rowe distributors are gathering June 4-6 at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs for the official release of the firm's new 1993 ***LaserStar America*** full CD jukebox. Not only is the release much earlier in the year for Rowe than usual, but quantities of the box actually began shipping to dealers in late May before the meeting. Reason? The production run on their previous *Patriot CD-100B* was so successful, they plumb ran out of parts long before the planned intro of the new box, according to Music VP **Joel Friedman.** He advised that the new juke remains very much the same as the '92 model inside, but sports a "spectacular and fantastic outside cabinet look! I don't think such a moving and exciting jukebox has ever been built," he added. By the way, Rowe will celebrate its 65th year in the jukebox manufacturing business at a gala to take place the evening following the new machine's debut.

NINTENDO'S RECORD PROFITS

Nintendo Ltd. (Tokyo) said they made record-breaking sales of home game units in the fiscal year ending March 31, '92 (i.e., figures include the all-important Christmas launch of their 16-bit home system to the U.S. market). Consolidated net sales were $4.2 billion, up from last year's $3.5 billion. Net income was up 26%, said the firm. No wonder their stock is so hot on the Japanese exchange!


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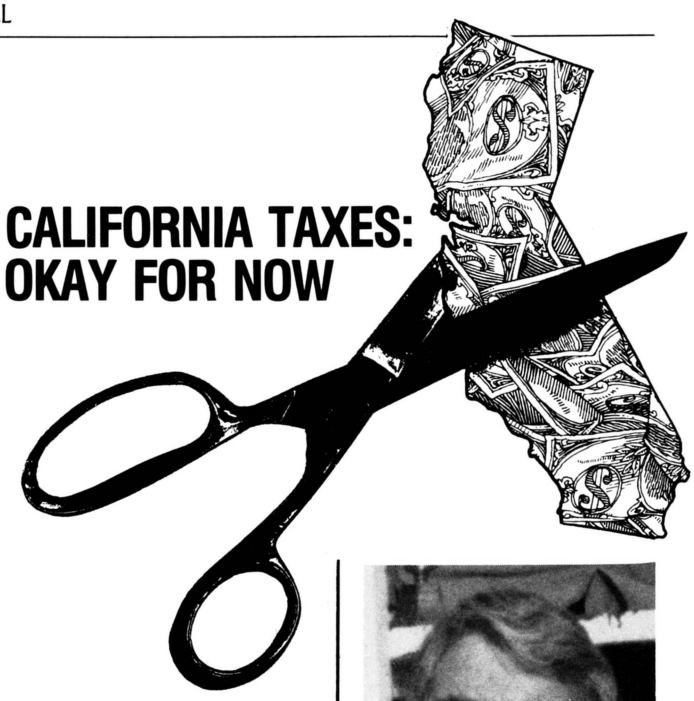
VIDEO LOTTERY UPDATE

AMOA's **Video Gaming Alliance** has named its board of directors, which will meet in Washington, D.C. on June 8. . . Regulated video poker machines (VLTs) will go on line in **Louisiana** at three or more race tracks (two in New Orleans, one near Lafayette) as of **June 1,** according to state police. "If everything goes okay, with no technical problems or other unforseen difficulties, then we hope to bring everyone else statewide on line around the first of July," according to a Sgt. Louis. "However, it's hard to give an exact date," he added. . . The **Kansas** operators' VLT bill is "dead" according to AMOA officer **Randy Chilton.** "We got all tangled up in Indian gambling and the lottery itself barely got extended," he explained. "So our VLT bill, which we expected to sail through the Senate, never got out despite coming up for a couple of close votes. But we're very optimistic about next year!" Randy added that the bill calls for 40% to state "not by our choice but simply because state officials warned us that a large lottery firm was pressuring legislators with the promise of a 60 to 65% state's share if they went sole-source. At 40%, it would not be rags-to-riches," Randy added, "but it would still be a nice addition to our revenues". . . **Tennessee** was not successful in passing its VLT bill. According to AMOT Exec Director **Sharon Johnson,** the bill passed out of committee and got to the Senate floor, but sponsors didn't call for a vote because it was clear that needed support was not there on the House side. The next session of the Tennessee legislature begins in January 1993. . . "Timing is everything in **New Jersey,**" smiled AMOA-NJ president **Frank Seninsky.** "Just before the first committee hearing on our bill, the governor vetoed a proposed tax increase, demanding to know how the legislature would make up the lost revenue. We think this could give VLT a push". . . State-run VLTs in **Oregon** are reportedly running into technical problems with computers blinking off several minutes at a time during peak hours. Lottery officials claim it's simply the normal challenges of setting up a complex new system, and they're touting their VLTs as a big success. Meanwhile, some location owners are very unhappy and OAMOA believes this proves private enterprise should run the show. OAMOA has about one month to gather enough voter signatures to put its "take back VLT" initiative on the ballot this fall. See the full Oregon story, beginning on **page 33.**

CALIFORNIA TAXES: OKAY FOR NOW



The California tax threat just won't go away. The good news: Sen. Killea's SB.1912 (a proposed 8% gross receipts tax) was defeated May 6 with help from CCMA, AAC, and Leroy Green (chairman of the Senate Revenue Committee). "We ended up with a four-to-one vote in the committee against this tax on our industry," said operator **Fred Gillmann.** But then AB.3392 (sponsored by Rep. Cortese) came along, seeking to impose a yearly licensing fee on so-called arcade video machines. Operator **Jack Love** estimates the bill could cost operators $4.35 for each $100 of original value of equipment, per year. "It's absolutely crazy," Jack said. "We argued against that one the same week we managed to defeat SB.1912. We said coin-op is already heavily taxed with sales taxes, state and federal income tax and many local licensing fees. We don't have a huge pool of profit which can be taxed . . . and we can't pass taxes along to our customers. Rep. Cortese had a weak case for his bill, so the committee suspended it. This is a courtesy which means he can argue it again, but it won't automatically carry over. I think we've put it to sleep and now we're just waiting for what's next. Lawmakers are facing a $12 billion deficit and are looking frantically for tax sources. The best way to respond is usually to approach the legislators quietly, behind the scenes, and educate them so as to kill any bill in committee. This approach usually works, and it doesn't embarrass anyone with a public defeat. I expect more taxes to be proposed, so we'll have to keep educating lawmakers."



FRED GILLMANN

TRADE SHOW SHOWDOWN: ATEI VS. IMA

Oops! Europe's major trade shows have been scheduled for overlapping dates next year. According to the British trade journal *Coin Slot,* the ATEI show takes place in London from Jan. 27-29, while the German IMA show is set for Jan. 27-30. A change of dates appears unlikely since organizers of both shows say they were "forced" into these dates by limited site availability. Well, at least American tradesters can save on transatlantic air fares.

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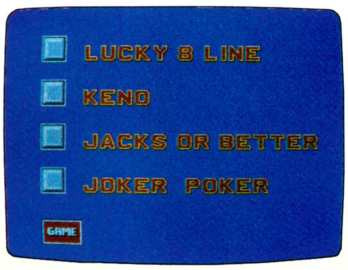
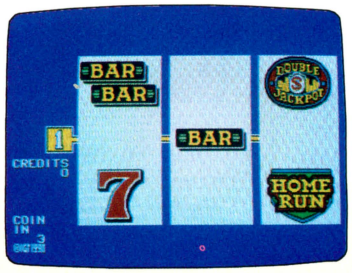


Menu Screen (sample)



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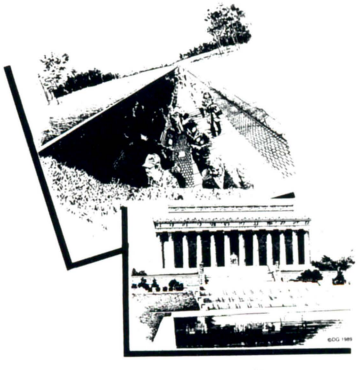
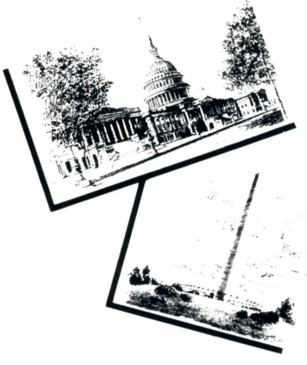
TRADE HEADS TO WASHINGTON, D.C. THIS MONTH

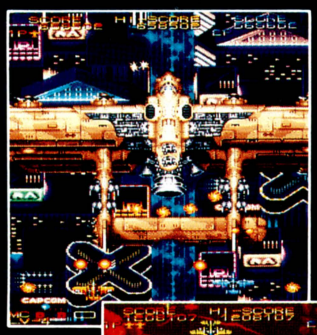


AMOA and AAMA members convene in **Washington, D.C.** this month **(June 7-10)** for the trade's annual lobbying convention. The industry is backing two causes: dollar coins and, for the future, regulated competition for info services via fiber-optic cables. It's a busy four days: tradesters will enjoy briefings by a bevy of senators and representatives at a series of speeches and conferences. They'll visit members of Congress to lobby one-on-one. Finally, tradesters will host a gala congressional reception featuring all the games, music and hoopla our industry can offer. Additional events include an informal board meeting of the Video Gaming Alliance, an AAMA board meeting, and the by-now traditional AAMA cookout at the FBI Academy.





The Air Battle Of The Century Has Begun.









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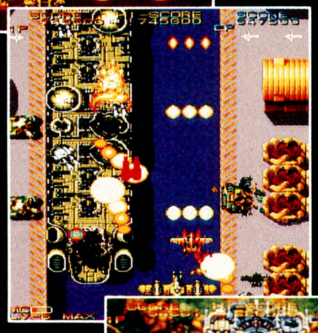





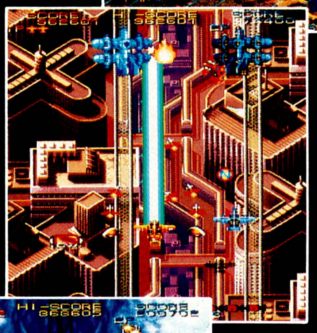





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The Summer Games of the 1992 Olympics are coming up in Barcelona, and your company can enjoy the special cachet that comes with being "a proud sponsor of the U.S. Olympics." In support of the U.S. Olympic team, AMOA and AAMA are making special kits available to their members for a donation amount. Each kit contains a number of stickers (for application on amusement equipment) plus an Olympic memorabilia item (depending on which kit you purchase). If you would like to be a proud supporter of the U.S. Olympic team, you may purchase a kit as a donation. For descriptions of the kits, as well as donation amounts, contact the U.S. Olympic Committee at the Development Div. Complex, 4615 Foreign Trade Zone Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO 80295; 719/578-4552. Be sure to mention AMOA and AAMA.

MOMA NAMES NEW PRESIDENT, TARGETS VLTs

MOMA (Minnesota Operators of Music & Amusement) has a new president, **Dan Galvin** (D&G Amusement Co., St. Paul). Galvin, a former VP of the group, succeeds **Roger Rasmussen,** who has resigned as MOMA prexy following the sale of his Minnesota business interests. (Roger is moving out of the state, too.) Galvin's first act was to announce that the MOMA board has engaged former Lieberman Music pro **Mike Anderson** as an independent consultant to drum up membership and coordinate the legislative program. MOMA is seeking a state-regulated VLT market. In pursuit of this, Anderson will travel extensively throughout the state to meet with operators and other interested parties. You can reach Dan or Mike by fax or phone through the MOMA office at 612/927-6662 (same line serves both functions).

SEGA SETTLES TRADEMARK SUIT

Phillip Morris USA and Sega Enterprises announced on May 7 that they'd reached settlement on a trademark infringement suit. The tobacco giant had sued Sega because some of its *Super Monaco GP* video drivers included Phillip Morris trademarks and other symbols in the background, and the tobacco firm claimed Sega failed to comply with an agreement to remove these visual elements. Sega denied the allegations, but to resolve the dispute has also agreed to place full-page color ads in *RePlay* and *PlayMeter* offering $200 to dealers, owners and operators for removing the Marlboro trademarks from games in their possession or under their authority. In the ad, Sega offers to send a free conversion kit with decals, computer chips and instructions needed to remove Marlboro symbols. The $200 payment would be made for each converted game upon Sega's receipt of the old computer chips. Sega will also provide technical assistance to any party needing it. Sega's phone is 408/435-0201.



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AAMA'S FAY TO ADVISE UNCLE SAM ON TRADE

AAMA Exec VP **Bob Fay** has accepted an invitation from U.S. Secretary of Commerce **Barbara Franklin** and U.S. Trade Representative **Carla Hills** to serve in the Industry Consultations Program as a member of the "Industry Sector Advisory Committee on Consumer Goods for Trade Policy Matters." In this role, Bob will provide info to these top government policy-makers as they pursue the trade objectives of Uncle Sam and the private sector alike. Others on Bob's 32-seat committee include reps from giants of American industry like Proctor & Gamble, Maytag, the Toy Mfrs. of America, Whirlpool, Phillip Morris, etc. "I am pleased that Bob was asked to serve as an advisor which will give AAMA direct input to the U.S. Government on important issues, such as tariffs, that are currently being addressed by the association's Foreign Business Development Program," said AAMA prexy **Bill Rickett.** What does this mean for coin-op? It means Bob Fay will be the industry's voice, helping advise on such matters as the North American free trade agreement between the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Congrats, Bob!





NEW PHONES; OLD PHONES

AAMA Director of Investigations **Bill Kidwell** has a new phone. Mark it in your files, please: it's 319/337-9810. Also, we mis-printed the toll-free number for **A.G. & Co.**, makers of that nifty head-to-head pinball-style game called *Soccer Ball.* Their phone is 708/345-9000.

READER NOTICE

For several months, U.S. subscribers have been receiving their magazines in stiff cardboard priority envelopes supplied to us by the U.S. Postal Service. While the envelope protects the magazine, several readers have complained that the mailman can't bend the package to fit into a small slot on the office door. So he leaves a note and brings the package back to the Post Office for pickup. If this has happened to you, please phone us at 818/347-3820. We'll make a point of putting your individual copy into the original soft-white envelope you remember. Thank you.

REDEMPTION CALLED COIN-OP'S FASTEST GROWING SEGMENT



"Redemption is the fastest-growing segment of the coin-op industry today," according to various experts we spoke to for this month's special report on arcades and redemption equipment. We polled arcade operators (results inside) and found that redemption is named as the top-earning type of machine, accounting for an average of 40% of arcade income. Redemption factories believe the U.S. now supports about 6,000 arcades and game rooms nationwide; of these, the factories believe only about half (most the arcades) have made a serious commitment to redemption. That means another 3,000 or so game rooms in bowling centers, minigolf courses, sports bars, etc. are virtually untapped... not to mention all the street locations that haven't gone past cranes. By the end of this summer, though, you're going to hear about a serious new program for "street redemption" from the likes of Lazer-Tron, using token-vending redemption pieces (no tickets) and an adapted Rowe vending machine which will take the tokens and award prizes. Meanwhile, this issue catches you up on the latest doings of various new and old arcade and redemption pros. Our special section covers everything from the latest French site of that "grand-daddy of pocket parks," Malibu Grand Prix, to a cover story on the original "redemption one-stop," Coin Concepts. Along the way we have features on Coastal Amusement Distributors' latest games, Sega's entry into the redemption niche, an ambitious kiddie-oriented family amusement center called Fun Time Pizza Corp., and much more including that poll of arcade operators. Section starts on **page 73.**

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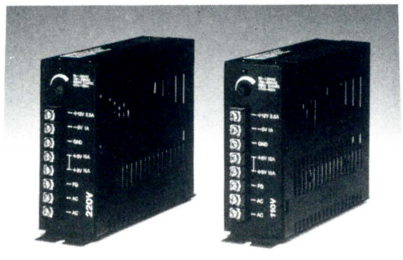

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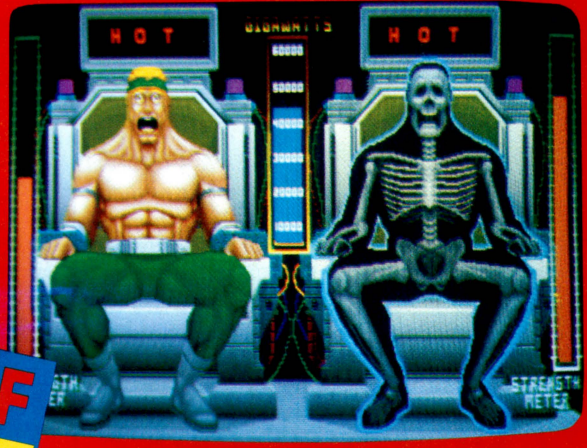

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On Your Mark...

by Marcus Webb



Parallel versions of *Street Fighter II Champion Edition* are widely available these days. That raises some important issues about the direction and future of our industry. Is the U.S. trade moving closer to a wide-open, truly worldwide market, one that would basically ignore national borders and distributor territories?

If so, some operators (and even certain distributors) might shout "hurray!" But before they do, let's think through the consequences. Fair play and competitive prices are always a good thing. However, absolutely free competition can be ruinous for the consumer as well as for industry. (If you don't believe that, just look at the U.S. airline business.)

If parallels are allowed to rewrite all the rules of distribution, we may eventually wind up with a market that has outsmarted itself. In the worst-case scenario, dealers would order very few "authorized" games, because of feared price competition from parallels. In this vacuum, factories could wind up selling straight through to the operator...either directly (through revenue sharing) or indirectly (through parallels). Eventually, such arrangements might put more power into the hands of factories, and take power away from American operators. Is this what we want?

It's not what Bill Beckham wants. The man who led the crusade to legalize parallel games is now selling those products. But, Beckham says American operators still need good distributors for the vast majority of their buys. "If every game that was available in kit form elsewhere in the world, was also sold as a kit in the U.S., we wouldn't have to bother with parallels," Beckham has always said.

Some U.S. tradesters believe it's basically up to the factories whether we have parallels or not. They think a factory's marketing decisions (i.e., which countries get games first, and in what quantity) can control the supply of goods worldwide...and therefore control the supply of parallels. However, other experts say it's not that simple. Because of weak copyright laws in much of the world, factories know every hit game will be copied very quickly. Therefore, the pressure is on to sell as many units as they can, and do this as fast as possible before copies appear and eat up sales in overseas markets.

In an odd way, the old system of protected U.S. distribution sometimes seemed to make American operators pay for the counterfeiting "sins" of foreign markets. Now that parallels are legal, our challenge is to make sure U.S. operators and dealers don't simply wind up paying for those "sins" in a different way. America's distribution system has helped factories and operators alike for 60 years. Whether they know it or not, American operators have often been shielded by the U.S. distributor's umbrella in the past. Can American dealers adapt and prosper in these changing times? Count on it, friends. They will!

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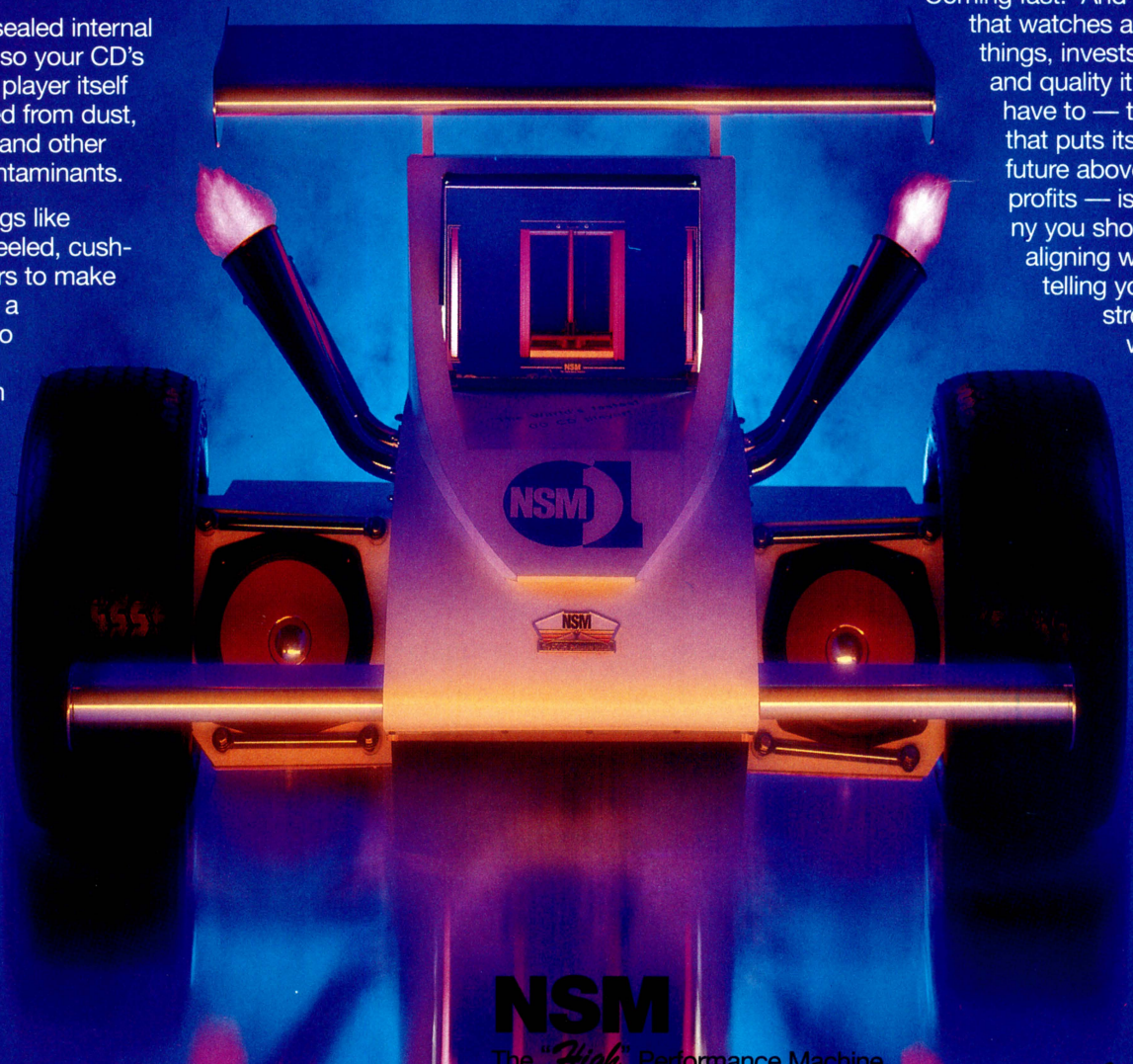

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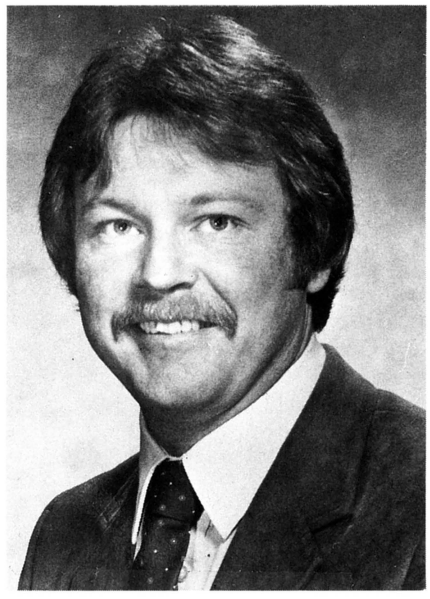
OREGON: 30-DAY COUNTDOWN

petition drive needs about 1,600 signatures a day till July 3; operators say private enterprise can run video lottery better

The clock is ticking! Oregon operators want to reclaim the state's new video lottery market for private enterprise, but time is running out. In mid-May, the Oregon Lottery Commission said it was running some 3,400 machines in 800 locations statewide. As this issue mails, tradesters have just about a month left to gather 50,000 or so additional signatures. A total of 67,000 signatures are needed by July 3 to put OAMOA's video lottery petition on the ballot this fall. Under the banner "Oregonians for Private Industry," OAMOA's petition would let citizens vote in favor of putting the VLT market in the hands of professional operators.

"Citizens of Oregon are happy to sign our petition, once they understand it's against the state government," said OAMOA prexy Rick Geraghty. He explained that public sentiment is running high against state bureaucracy these days (for example, a non-industry petition to recall the governor nearly got on the ballot . . . and its backers will try again). And, said Rick, in OAMOA's opinion the Oregon Lottery is doing a very poor job of setting up and administering the new VLT market.

Said Rick: "The effort to turn Oregon around is going on, and for operators in this state it's worth getting involved. For operators in other states, everything you have heard about VLTs displacing other games and hurting amusement revenues is true. It makes it hard on us to raise the money to fight this battle . . . but for the good of operators in Oregon and other states, we must win this fight. If we can't turn Oregon around, the battle for operator-run VLTs will be tougher in every American jurisdiction."



RICK GERAGHTY

STATE-RUN VLT CRITICIZED

Operators have always claimed they could do a better job of running VLTs than state employees. The Oregon experience may be proving these claims true. Lottery officials originally had hoped to place 10,000 VLTs in 2,000 locations. However, by May 15 Geraghty said the lottery had only succeeded in placing one-third that many terminals, and in qualifying one-third that many locations. Many location owners didn't even apply for VLT placement, Geraghty said. Some locations were reportedly reluctant to comply with strict disclosure requirements; others didn't want to pay high installation costs.

Where VLTs did go in, some location owners reportedly experienced problems with VLTs shutting down briefly during peak hours; others may have had accounting discrepancies due to central office computer failure. "You can't believe what a pain it's been," said Suzy Wilson, co-owner of The Country Inn, a location in Tualitin, Ore., which has had state-run VLTs since March 29. "The lottery is taking out more money than we think they should. It seems like the computers must be losing memory when the machines shut down. We hope they are solving it, but right now it's a big mess and it's been this way since March 29!"

The Oregon Lottery, for its part, did not confirm or deny accounting difficulties caused by computers. Lottery spokesperson Marlene Meiser downplayed any difficulties with VLT performance or the rate of installation. "It's a highly technical, complicated system," she said. "There have been a variety of problems and we've been trying to work

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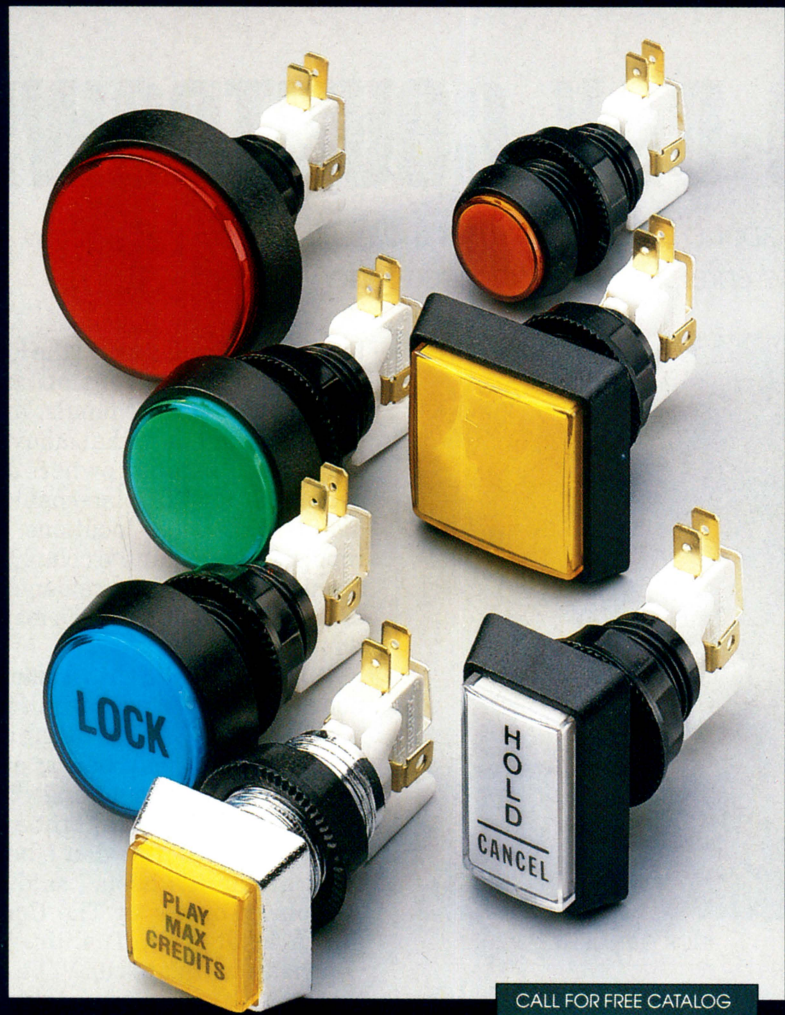

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that out." Meiser stated that such problems were "isolated" and added that no definite timetable was now in place for completing the 10,000-unit VLT market. "Rather than going in spurts we'll just be adding units and locations gradually throughout the year," she said.

GOING TO THE VOTERS

OAMOA, however, believes that Suzy Wilson has plenty of company. OAMOA also hopes stories like Wilson's can convince voters they should hand over the job of running VLTs to operators. "We have to get out the message that this is a private enterprise issue," Rick Geraghty stated. "Voters must understand that casting doubt on operators for security reasons is a sham. If people understand that, I think we'll have the votes to pass our petition."

Geraghty said the total cost of the signature drive could run to $77,000 and OAMOA has already collected most of that sum. However, more money is needed. OAMOA seeks donations and political advice from any source — including national associations, other state associations, and individual trade members, among others. "If anybody wants to donate funds with strings attached and tell us how they want it spent, we would be happy to accommodate them," said Rick.

Once OAMOA's proposal is on the ballot, even more funds will be required in late summer and fall to educate voters about the referendum. "As far as the public knows, the games are out there and they don't understand what the problem is," Rick said. "We can change this perception, but in order to do that, we need to pay for some TV spots to get our message out."

Meantime, the drive continues to gather those signatures. "We have just stepped up our efforts with paid signature gatherers again," Rick reported. "We're targeting some big events like the political primaries, which attract many registered voters, and the Rose Festival which also draws big crowds."

If you want to help, or if you'd like to learn more about the Oregon VLT battle, call OAMOA president Rick Geraghty at 503/469-3489. "These days I'm living on this telephone," he said.

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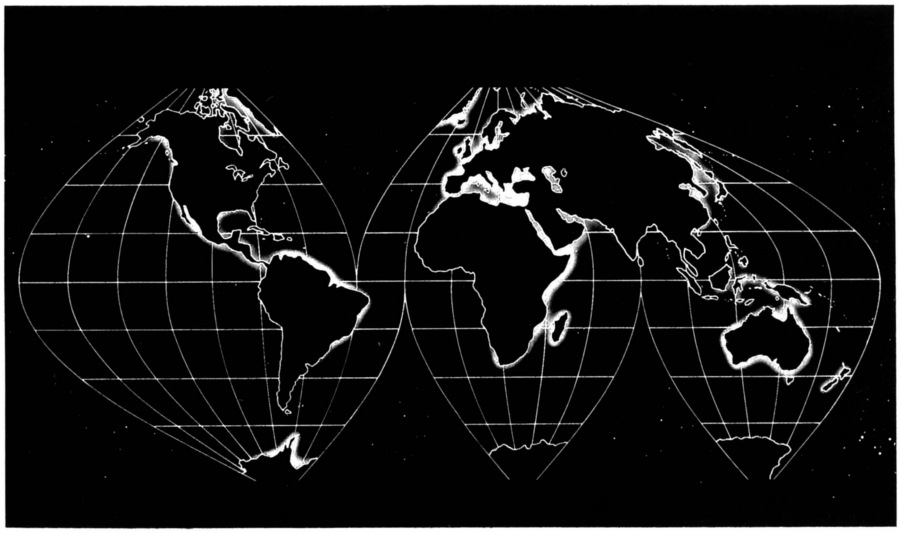

TRADE SAMPLES TRULY GLOBAL MARKET

U.S. sees many parallels of 'Street Fighter II Champion Edition'; global trafficking shakes old rules of controlled distribution

Finally, the other shoe has dropped. Last Dec. 1, by act of Congress, parallel imports of video games became legal to buy, sell and operate in the United States. Since then, coin-op has wondered: what will happen when a factory offers a huge video hit in "dedicated only" format to the U.S. trade? The answer is now coming into focus, thanks to Capcom USA's *Street Fighter II Champion Edition*. What happens is controversy and confusion. . . and, maybe, a challenge to the traditional rules of distribution.

For the moment, Capcom USA has reluctantly declined to discuss the situation in print (although we get the feeling they'd like to). Their decision is quite understandable; the company has a number of issues to take care of. At any rate, Capcom personnel know the pages of this magazine are open to their comments at all times.

Meanwhile, however, much of the industry is buzzing over the parallel situation. Here are some of the facts:

- At least two of the biggest "establishment" distributors in the U.S. are buying legitimate, parallel versions of *Champion Edition* directly or indirectly from European sources. These distributors sell the parallels to U.S. operators.
- At least one of these prominent dealers is shipping parallel *Champion Editions* widely over the U.S., not just within his own territory.
- In early May, parallel brokers reportedly had more *Champion Editions* available for sale than authorized Capcom dealers had. . . at least, some very reliable sources claimed this was the case. (Other sources said it may "appear" that parallel dealers had bigger supplies, simply because it's faster to ship PCBs than whole games.)
- Neither authorized dealers nor parallel brokers had as many games available as they wanted. "We'd like more games, sure," was the wry remark of one authorized dealer. And one parallel broker added: "There are not enough boards around the world to meet demand. Almost everybody worldwide is sold out through May."
- Capcom USA had stated (back in March) that no parallels would hit U.S. shores for some months. However, reliable sources said Capcom Japan sold many *Champion Editions* to European and Asian dealers, very shortly after U.S. release of the game. Those sales provided the parallels now flooding the American market.
- Capcom's authorized U.S. dealers are delighted with sales and earnings of their dedicated version of the game. However, they are displeased with parallel competition. They're also displeased with reports that *Champion Edition* is selling to Canadian tradesters in kit format.

WHAT IS A PARALLEL IMPORT?

For those who've been asleep for the past five years, a parallel import (in our industry) is a lawfully-made video game PCB intended to be sold and operated in a foreign market. . . but it is imported into the U.S. (new or used) by brokers who buy them overseas, and ship them into the States for resale.

Parallel brokers sell these boards to American operators from their own companies or through a network of dealers, often at discount prices and without needed artwork, control panel materials, etc. that make up complete conversion kits.

For the last several years, parallel board brokers worked in direct competition with the original manufacturer's authorized, copyright-protected agents and distributors, who sell these kits in complete form or, on occasion, as dedicated video games. Once parallels become legal to operate, however, it's possible some authorized U.S. distributors may also sell parallels.

WHAT ABOUT TRADITIONAL DISTRIBUTION?

"Some American tradesters at the factory and distribution level are plenty upset by all this," commented a coin-op legal expert. "But parallels are totally lawful. Whether they are new or used boards doesn't make any difference under the law. Capcom Japan's sales to its distributors in foreign markets were also totally lawful. I don't really see what anybody can do about it."

According to some observers, the bold use of parallels by certain "establishment" U.S. dealers may pose a possible challenge to the trade's traditional distribution pattern, formed by decades of a disciplined market. "Sure, from a legal point of view, every distributor has the right to sell parallels," said one prominent West Coast operator. "Until now, the question has been whether distributors would claim a 'moral' right to deal in these goods. However, with *Champion Edition* we've seen some of the industry's largest and most respected distributors jump into the parallel market early and aggressively. It's like an endorsement of the whole process. If it's okay for those guys, it's okay for everybody."

SMILES & FROWNS

Depending on who you talk to, these results are viewed as disruption . . . or liberation. "This situation is exactly why we wanted parallels to be legal in the first place," declared Bill Beckham, the Ohio operator whose 1987 lawsuit touched off the trade's multi-year parallel battle. Said Beckham: "American operators want to be competitive in the world market. If games are offered as kits in every other market in the world, then we want the choice of buying them in kit format, too."

Authorized Capcom distributors are not thrilled about the situation. Betson Distributing (the largest U.S. distributorship, with several offices nationwide) carries Capcom video product. Betson president Peter Betti told *RePlay:* "Parallel sales are a minor annoyance at this point. They have not had any serious impact on our sales of *Champion Edition,* and certainly not on our future marketing plans. However, we are dismayed that some reputable dealers have gotten involved in selling parallels. We feel that if such a practice continues or becomes broader, it will not be good for the long-term health of the industry."

Others among Capcom's authorized U.S. dealers reportedly toyed with the idea of dealing in parallels themselves, in order to compete and to get sufficient stock of this high-demand item. However, this is viewed as unlikely. "Two wrongs don't make a right," said one authorized dealer. "In the long run, anybody who has the line, then sells parallels on top, is just contributing to the problem. Any distributor who did that would be cutting his own throat."

Certain smaller distributors have told *RePlay* they would like to offer parallels, or even transship certain U.S. product as jobbers, but they claim a double standard prevents them. "Apparently it's okay for the big guys, but I'd be punished for doing the same thing," complained one dealer. "My firm or our suppliers could possibly lose certain lines."

LEGAL ISSUES

Again, parallels themselves are legal to buy, sell and operate. However, some suppliers are said to be selling copied Capcom monitor bezels, cabinet graphics, etc. along with the game. Technically, use of such materials with a parallel board by U.S. operators is not legal under trademark and copyright law.

Here again, this practice has upset some tradesters, while others simply shrug their shoulders. "Operators just have to be aware that it's illegal to use Capcom's name on the game," said one street veteran. "But that doesn't stop kids from playing. They know that it is."

A more serious legal issue is the alleged availability of counterfeit versions of *Champion Edition.* Reports about this subject were mixed. According to parallel advocate Bill Beckham, the worldwide counterfeit industry always cranks up very quickly after the release of a hot new game. Confirmation on this came from the coin-op "establishment," too. "Counterfeits are around; we all know it," declared one authorized Capcom dealer. Also confirming this allegation, the former employee of a foreign dealer told *RePlay* that his old boss was definitely selling counterfeits of the game.

On the other hand, some expert sources said in mid-May that nobody had been able to physically verify the presence of counterfeit *Champion Editions* in the U.S. However, industry observers believe the appearance of counterfeits is probably just a matter of time. Indeed, by the time this issue of *RePlay* arrives in your mailbox, the first counterfeits of *Champion Edition* could have been manufactured, sold and (we hope) seized by U.S. Customs.

RePlay urges readers to follow the law in every detail. If you have any questions about legal issues, contact AAMA Director of Investigations Bill Kidwell at 319/337-9618.



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A REAL 'CHAMPION'

Capcom USA's blockbuster lives up to its name; players love the game & trade loves the earnings

Several weeks of earnings have provided rock-solid confirmation: Capcom has done it again! Even before the game was previewed at ACME in March, Capcom's *Street Fighter II Champion Edition* had already generated more player excitement than any game in recent memory. It was the spring show's hottest title and instantly became the industry's greatest "demand" item in five years. By early May, some operators were calling it "the greatest video game since *Pac-Man!*"

"This isn't just a hit game; with most players it's a cult!" smiled Capcom USA's Jolly Backer. "Kids are telling locations, 'if you don't get *Champion Edition* we'll go somewhere else.' Street ROI on this piece is 15 weeks, and arcades earn the cost back in four or five weeks. The game is burning 'em up! It's a phenomenon we didn't expect," Jolly added.

UNIVERSAL PRAISE

Praise for the game was universal. "It's a lot more challenging than the original edition," said game player John Grund. "You have to get used to the idea of both people playing the same characters at the same time, but most players strongly prefer the *Champion Edition* because it's new and they can be more characters. Almost all of the *Champion Editions* have bigger screens and

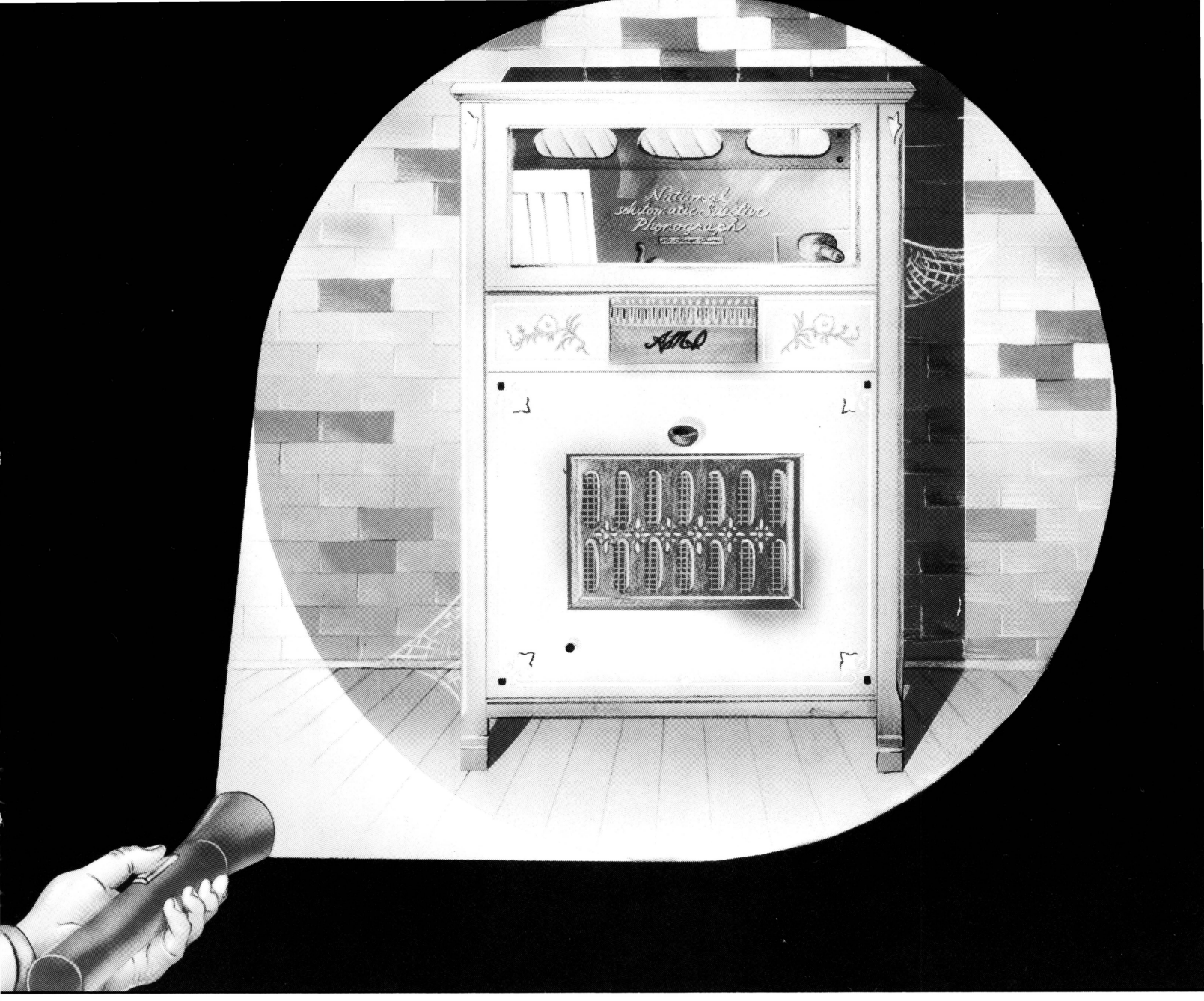


wider control panels, and I think that's because the company realized that's what players want."

John added that the release of *Champion Edition* has not hurt the popularity of the original *Street Fighter II*. "A good number of players still like the earlier version and they're still playing it just as much," he said. John added that most games he's seen in the L.A. area were set on 50¢ to start and 25¢ to continue, although some were set on 50¢ to continue.

Operators are also pleased with earnings. One arcade owner (who had just worked all night installing new *Champion Editions* when we phoned) told *RePlay:* "I'm quite happy with the results. Of course, I would have liked to have paid less, but I sure can't argue with these numbers. Weekly earnings are better for *Champion Edition* than for some games I paid $12,000 for. In addition, the overall gross of our gameroom increased dramatically after we installed our first *Champion Editions.* It didn't take a quarter out of any other game that I could tell. In fact, earnings on the original *Street Fighter IIs* went up initially for a time, after *Champion Edition* came in."

Distributors were also delighted with the performance of *Champion Edition.* "From what operators are saying, the game has actually raised collections of existing *Street Fighter IIs* by 10 to 20%," noted Betson Pacific's John Lotz. "Many operators thought they could pull *Street Fighter II* from their prime locations and move it down the route, but locations wouldn't let them. Everybody feels the earning curve on



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Champion Edition will be as good as it was for the original *Street Fighter II.*"

Even competing video factories are full of admiration. Said one top manufacturing exec: "I don't know how Capcom did it, whether it was by accident or design. But who cares? The point is, they created a game which players are crazy for."

PRODUCTION PLANS: FULL STEAM AHEAD

Introducing the game at ACME, Capcom had originally said *Champion Edition* would be produced in limited quantities, noting that plenty of *Street Fighter IIs* had already been sold. In fact, the run on that game was so long, Capcom admitted, that the factory had several new titles "backed up in the pipeline" and they were anxious to get started building them.

Now that's all changed. Dealers and operators nationwide are clamoring for more games, so "*Champion Edition* is no longer a limited edition," Backer said. "We're building them as fast as we can to meet everybody's needs. People at Dynamo and 3-Koam are even working on Saturdays! We plan to build *Champion Edition* through the summer and are doing our utmost to get the game out." He added that Capcom had decreed no limit on U.S. production. (Heavy demand and relatively short supply of the game in the U.S. was aggravated by a significant number of parallel imports from overseas. See separate story for details.)

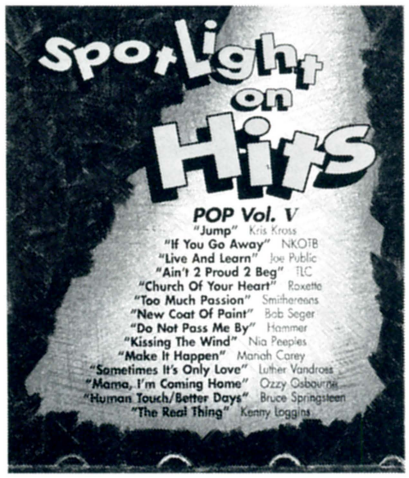
CAPCOM®

DEMAND FOR "MEGA-HITS"

One note of irony about the success of *Champion Edition:* operators have spent the last several years going to trade shows looking for "another *Pac-Man,*" only to have the so-called experts tell them not to be so demanding. Such phenomenal hits only happen rarely, said the experts. Operators were told they should not judge the success of an entire trade show, or of the entire industry, on the presence or absence of a single mega-hit.

But such comments were not heard during this spring's ACME show. Instead, it's a safe bet that video factory execs were telling their designers: "I don't care what it takes, I want you guys to create another *Champion Edition* for **this** company!" As Louis Boasberg wrote in our last issue, the industry is fondly looking forward to the day when it enjoys the luxury of five, six or ten *Street Fighter IIs* at the same time. It's a lovely dream . . . but meanwhile, tradesters are happily making the most of Capcom's bounty.

Turn Your Locations On To...





"Spotlight On Hits" is a 14 track CD compilation of current **hits**, **hits** that are still climbing the charts, future **hits**, current juke box **hits** and an all time **hit**. These tracks have been carefully selected so that they may be programmed in family oriented locations and appeal to all age groups.

Each **"Spotlight On Hits"** CD comes packaged with **on-location promotional materials.** The promotional material consists of an attractive display sleeve with vibrant colors and a unique **Spotlight** design to ensure maximum visibility on the jukebox, a 19" x 28" four color **poster**, **table tents** and special florescent **colored title strips** that will fit any box.

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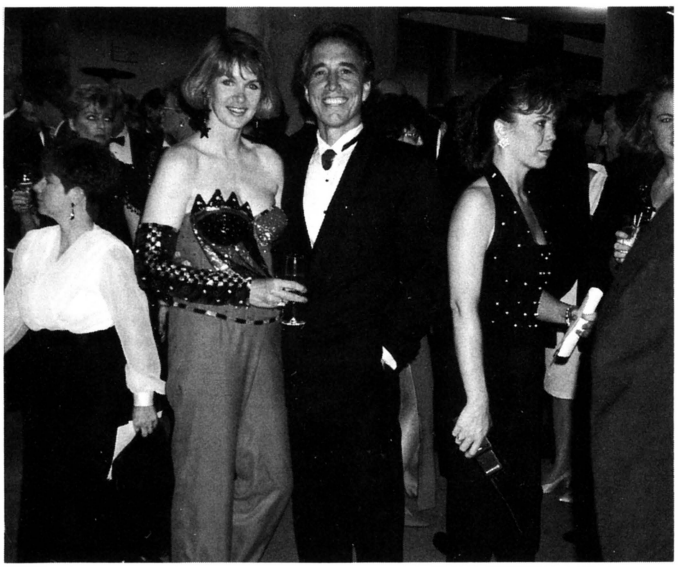




Above: Lazer-Tron CEO and prexy Norm Petermeier with wife (& Foundation board member) Stephanie, and of course one of his products.

Left: President of the Charity Ball Foundation, Gerry Beemiller (at right), with wife and board member Paulette.

REWIND, FAST FORWARD AND PLAY!

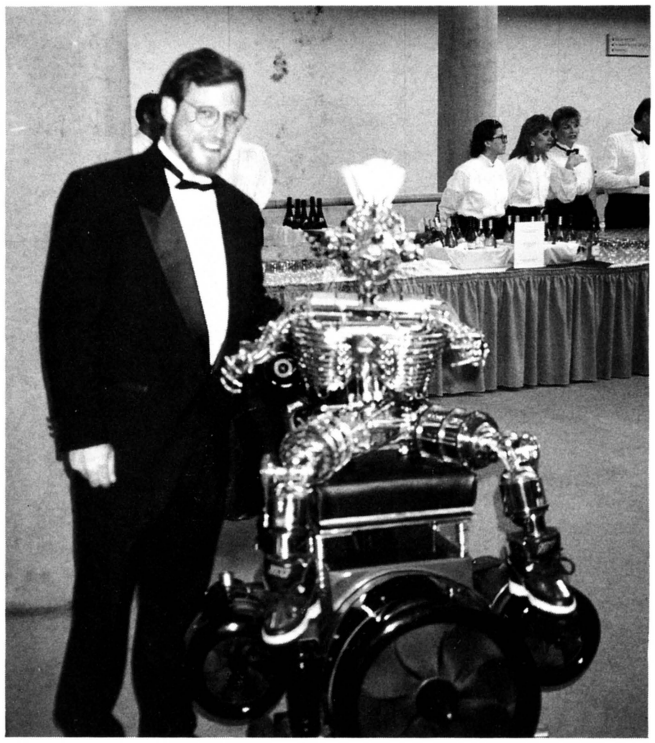
Silicon Valley Charity Ball theme reminds of area's beginnings and looks at its promising future; ball salutes local business and raises $600,000 for area charities

Raising fun. That seemed to be the reason a bunch of black-tie clad business people got together for the Silicon Valley Charity Ball on April 25 at the San Jose Convention Center. But the gathering of high-tech execs represented a much nobler cause: raising funds. Held simultaneously as a toast to Silicon Valley businesses and a fundraiser for local charities, the extravaganza drew thousands of community supporters. Notably, area coin-biz companies were among the Ball's most enthusiastic participators.

This year marked the event's sixth annual philanthropic celebration, making its theme of "Rewind, Fast Forward, Play" truly apropos. Indeed, the event's organizers orchestrated a look back to the roots of Silicon Valley while providing a glimpse forward to its ever-promising future. Thanks to "game rooms"



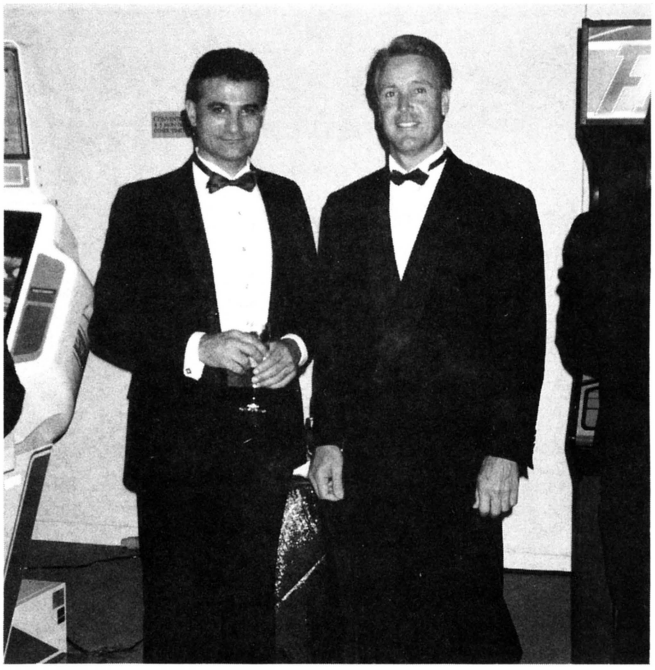
Atari's Anne Hayes with latest firm's latest hit, *Relief Pitcher.*



Semborg Corp. president Donald Wright with Jake, one of the firm's "Semborgs" billed as a "truly interactive entertainment system."



Exidy/BullsEye's Bob Baker with wife Lisa.



Sega's Tom Petit (right) with Charity Ball guest.

supplied by Atari, Betson, Capcom, Data East, Exidy, Lazer-Tron, Meltec, Namco-America, Sega and Ingolf (maker of golf simulators), the "play" theme sprung to life.

While providing guests with arcade fun, coin-biz manufacturers gave the charities a shot at a little bonus play. After playing a game in the "Big 10 Arcade," guests won tickets which they could "redeem" by dropping them in one of 29 tubes marked with each recipient charity's name. At the end of the evening, the three charities with the most tickets were given extra donation money. Between playing for a cause, guests couldn't resist Lazer-Tron's customized Silicon Valley Charity Ball shooting gallery, complete with a mission to be the first to destroy a computer chip.

Other entertainment included nearly non-stop music by a variety of bands (as well as would-be music makers singing their hearts out on karaoke), a wise-cracking Semborg (robot) named Jake, comedy by area jokester Kevin Pollak and highlight hilarity from *Saturday Night Live* regular Dana Carvey.

Known as the largest one-night fundraiser in the Bay Area, the Charity Ball has already raised $1,735,000 for more than 50 local charities in earlier years. This year's proceeds will go to such worthy groups as the Age Center Alliance, Emergency Housing Consortium, Hospice of the Valley, and others.



Lazer-Tron sales VP Ron Carrara with lovely wife.



Data East's Steve Bristow with wife Patty.







photos on this and next page courtesy of Dave & Harry Peck, Family Amusement Corp.

L.A. RIOTS

operators lose games & locations to theft, fire & vandalism; distributors, surrounded by riots & blazes, survive intact

The Southern California coin machine industry suffered heavy losses in the Los Angeles riots of April 30 to May 2. No dollar figures for coin-op damage were available, but industry observers estimate that losses easily exceeded one million dollars. One well-known operator estimated that his company alone would probably suffer losses in equipment and redemption merchandise topping $500,000 when all the facts were in. Another major operator lost up to $150,000 in equipment on locations. It was a heavy blow to L.A. operators, many of whom were reportedly self-insured.

Scores of locations, including ma-

HURT COIN-OP



ny liquor stores and convenience stores, were looted and destroyed during the three-day spree of lawlessness. Naturally, the coin-op games inside these locations were also stolen, trashed or burned. At least one suburban arcade had 15 games trashed by angry youths, and CNN reported that a downtown arcade was the site of gunfire aimed at National Guard units.

Miraculously, L.A.'s distributorships came through safely, despite being located in the middle of riots and fires. Rioting began in mid-afternoon on Thursday, April 30 after word hit the street that all four L.A. police were found "not guilty" in the Rodney King assault case.

According to Sandy Bettelman of C.A. Robinson & Co., the firm was still doing business on Thursday afternoon, then shut down as conditions worsened. "By Thursday night it was even worse than the TV coverage could convey," Sandy Bettelman said. "Driving home, I passed many buildings on fire, looters, and no police anywhere. The city truly was a war zone."

After C.A.'s crew evacuated the building, thugs bashed down the distributorship's warehouse gate and also broke in the front double doors leading into C.A.'s showroom. Sometime during the night, a rioter apparently tried to throw a Molotov cocktail up to C.A.'s roof, but it hit the side of the building and fell back to the street. At one point during the night, a neighbor who lives next door to C.A. Robinson came to the distributorship's rescue, shooting his pistol in the air (the man is a veteran of the U.S. armed services) and chasing rioters away.

The next morning, Sandy Bettelman and a couple of armed employees came to secure the building. Inside, they found a lead pipe and a can of lighter fluid. Said a grateful Sandy: "We made it, but just barely."

A few blocks down the street, Betson Pacific also made it through the riots with no physical damage to their building or inventory. How-

ever, marketing topper John Lotz said execs armed with guns had to escort their employees out of the area as rioting heated up on Thursday.

Century Vending & Distributing also cleared out on Thursday, but suffered no damage. "Police came in and closed our building; they said we should evacuate," said Jerry Monday. "Fortunately we didn't have any trouble."

"At one point, rioters were coming down our street and hitting all the AMPM mini-markets. The National Guard set up a roadblock of dumpsters at the end of the street and it was still in place May 4."

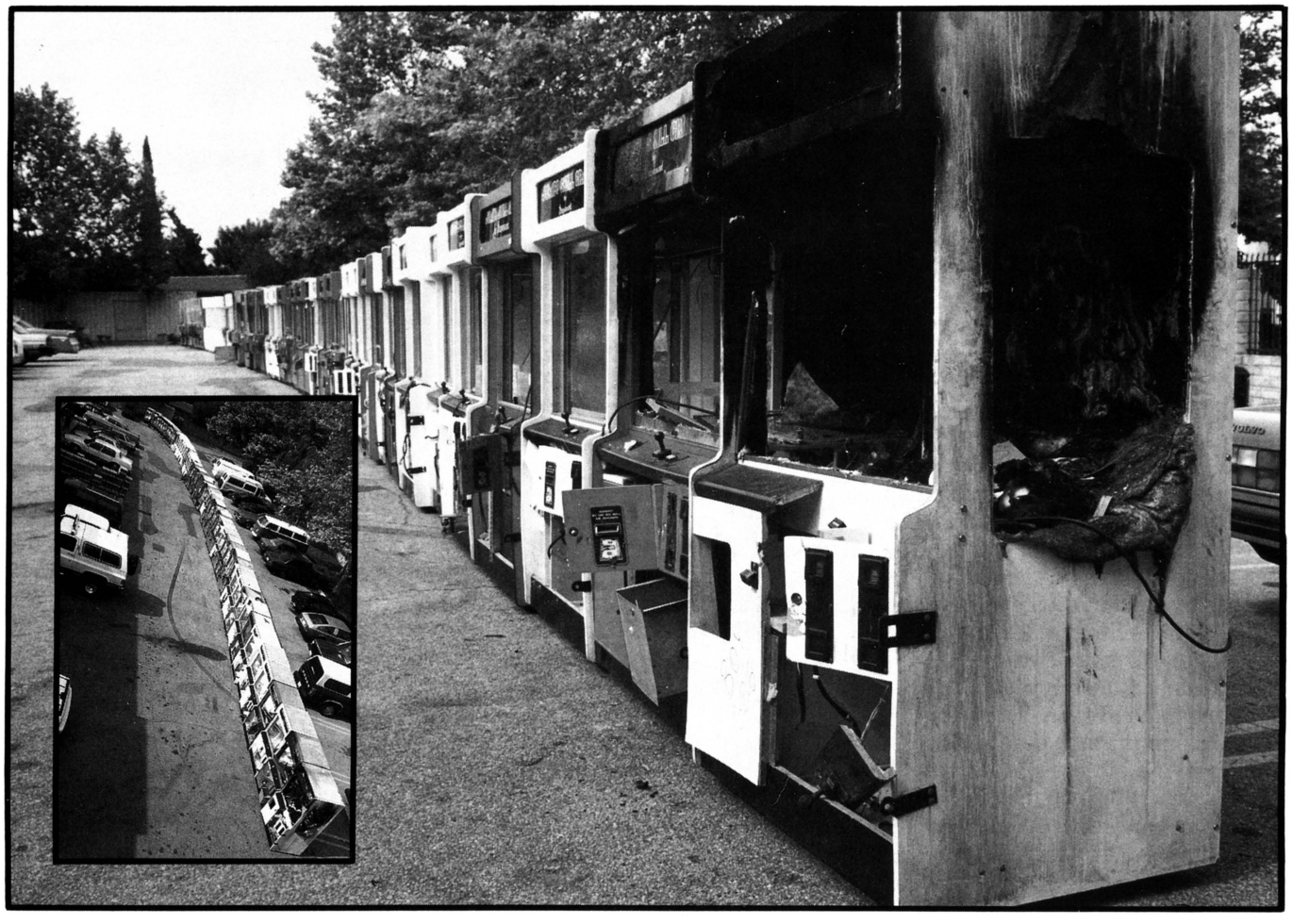
Operators and locations suffered the worst damage. "We had a lot of locations trashed," reported a major operator in the area. "Rioters went after grocery stores, especially ethnic markets. Video games, kiddie rides and cranes were all targets. Rioters stole them, burned them, smashed them, anything they could do. I think our own industry got hit pretty heavily because so many bars and other businesses were hurt. I know first-hand that one arcade in the L.A. suburbs was hurt, with some 15 or more games smashed, although not the entire arcade. The operator had some minority attendants and they got the kids to stop rioting."

> ***'By Thursday night, it was even worse than the TV coverage could convey. Driving home, I passed many buildings on fire, looters, and no police anywhere. The city truly was a war zone.'***
>
> **— Sandy Bettelman**

In the aftermath of the riots, L.A. is looking at ways to rebuild and so is the amusement industry. "After the initial night of fires and looting, our first call was to Betson Pacific," said C.A.'s Sandy Bettelman. "Even though we're competitors, things have been cool. We discussed how we could work together to help the many operators who lost equipment."

Sandy added that C.A. Robinson has given no serious consideration to relocating. "Anywhere else we could go would be less convenient for many of our customers, and it would increase our rents and overhead," he pointed out. "Considering that the last riot was 27 years ago, we hope it will be another 27 years before such a problem comes up again!"

Operator David Jackson, a leading voice in the Amusement Assn. of California, advised operators to review their location contracts, with an eye toward having coin-op equipment covered by the location's insurance of its contents. "Then when operators submit a claim, it's automatically paid," David said. "It's the best way to get covered."



photos courtesy of Dave Jackson, Pachinko Palace

Operator Opinions

Q: *How did the L.A. riots affect your business?*

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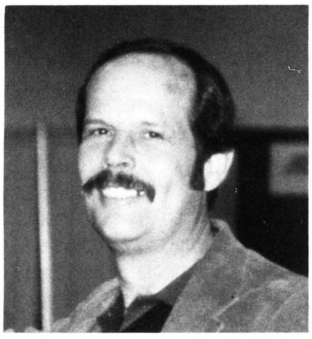

DALE MOORE
L.A. Games
Los Angeles

We ended up losing about 20 games altogether. We lost two *Street Fighter IIs,* several pinballs and other videos. The total was probably worth between $30,000 and $40,000. That represents about five locations: three burned down and two got looted. During the riots I was watching a live shot of a building on fire, taken from a TV news helicopter, and suddenly said: I know that place! I've got pingames there! It was bizarre; I felt I could almost see my games burning. And one location actually called us before they got looted to say the buildings around them were under attack; please come get your games because we have to leave soon. We thanked them but decided not to risk a driver's safety over a few games. After the riots, in one case the individual who took the equipment brought it back to the location and actually tried to sell the games back to us! We said you can either give them to us and we won't pursue it any further, or else we'll go out right now and find a policeman. He ended up giving it back to us. I heard several operators took major hits. One operator lost 35 games; another lost well over 100. Of course, there was a corresponding loss in collections. I was afraid the riots would cut across he effect of deliveries of *Champion Edition,* and yes, the first collection after the riot was down. But earnings since then have rebounded even higher, and that is making up for it! *Champion Edition* is the "game of the decade." In L.A. now, people are looking for cheap entertainment and familiar diversions. I guess they want to take their minds off the city's tensions and troubles. So collections are definitely not at a loss.

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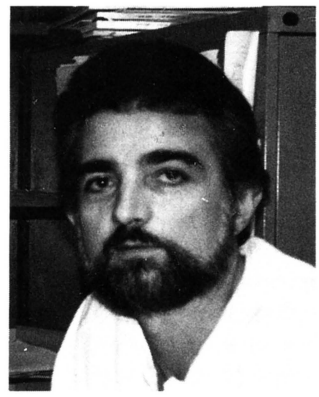

HARRY PECK
Family Amusement Corp.
Los Angeles, California

Many of our locations burned to the ground, some of which will never be rebuilt. At least eight of our 7-Eleven, mini-mart and video rental store locations are gone forever. Others, not as severely damaged, will take about a month to start their business again. It's been hard to even get a look at these locations. Many of them are boarded up. When we tried to pick up our equipment in one location, we couldn't get all of it since there was a pinball holding the roof up! So far, we've had between 50 to 70 pieces stolen or destroyed. The curfew lost us more business, and while it was in effect our collections were only 20-40% of the norm. Right now, we're just picking up the pieces. [Editor's note: look for Harry's dramatic photos of the riots and looting of his equipment elsewhere in this issue.]

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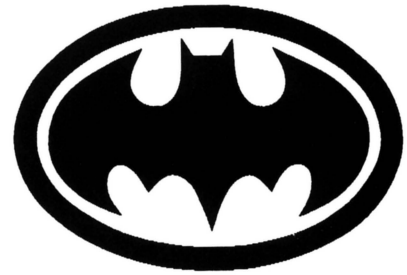
BILLY ALLEN
Ace Coin Machine Company
Compton, California

I was on the intersection of Gage and Atlantic when the riots began. I'm about 6'1" and weigh



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170 pounds and the people in that neighborhood didn't like my presence. They blocked the street but luckily I had a gun on me and I finally got away. I took back streets and dodged around until I made it into a safe neighborhood. The next day on the job, I found myself with a car full of rioters behind me and another car next to me. When they pulled out a gun in the car next to me, I could see what was coming next so I popped the clutch of my truck and rammed them. Even after that they chased me three blocks before I got away. Everybody said the riots were only in a certain area, but we had carloads of people not from our neighborhood who were cruising around, looking over the liquor stores and C-stores. I've been in this business since I was a kid and it hurt my feelings to realize that some location owners resented my coming around just because of race. We have some locations that are in rough neighborhoods, but heck, you've got to go where the money is. During the riots I pulled a lot of our people off the streets because I didn't want anyone to get killed just for doing their job. Even our route man carried a gun for a while. We were fortunate as far as equipment; we had no robberies. I just hope it's cooling down and we will do all right now.

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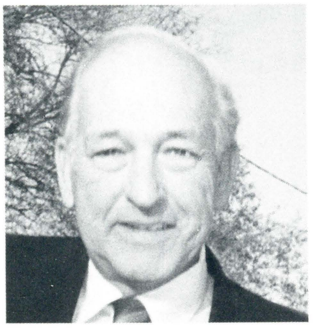

DAVE SUHY
Small Change
Canoga Park, California

We had a bar location at Crenshaw and Martin Luther King streets, which was a riot hot spot. Luckily the owner stayed inside and managed to ward off the crowd gathering outside. It was scary, because toward the end of the day, about 500 people had collected in front. We weren't so lucky with our collections. The curfew hurt us the most. People weren't going out at night so our main cocktail lounge and tavern accounts saw little, if any, business. In fact, our collections dropped about half that week. Also, our distributors who do business in the city closed during the worst of the riots and looting, so it was like we were cut off from industry communication. Again, fortunately, we didn't lose any equipment or locations.

• • • • • •



RICHARD ROCK
Catalina Games
Van Nuys, Calif.

Collections are down. People are just plain scared to go out on the streets. Fear of being shot will do that to people. We lucked out, though. Our locations are intact and we didn't suffer any direct effects from the riots. Just taking the indirect effects were enough . . .

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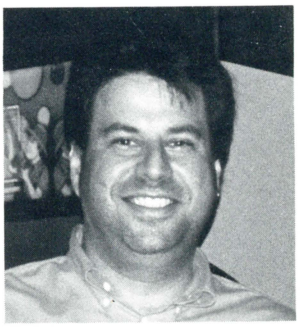

PAUL SPIEGEL
Active West
Los Angeles, California

Our bowling and fun centers closest to the riot areas did almost no business during that time. There's been some pick-up, but not a full recovery as of mid-May. In our locations further from the riot areas, we also lost business because people stayed home to watch TV. Our closest call came when the shopping plaza where one of our bowling centers is located burned. All other stores were damaged, but the bowling center survived.



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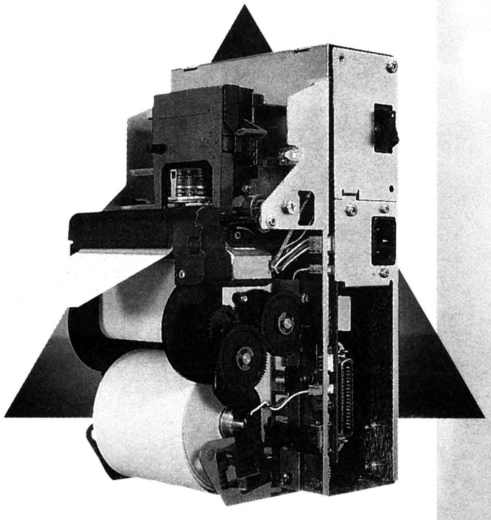

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—Michael Kumpf, Senior VP—Engineering

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THE GETAWAY

Williams Electronics shifts into high gear with its exciting new pinball; machine incorporates new features and fun playfield extras

Thrill to the sound of squealing wheels! Experience the exhilaration of a high speed ride! Revel in a down and dirty car chase of the criminal kind! Shift into high gear with the new *Getaway: High Speed II* pinball from Williams, and watch your collections take off. With this latest introduction to its flipper line, pinball is steered into a new level of playfield artistry, says the company.

As a sequel to yesteryear's hit *High Speed,* the *Getaway* is just as exciting (if not more so). Indeed, the creative team responsible for *Terminator 2* has set new limits for *Getaway.* New features include the revolutionary opto-magnetic ball accelerator "Supercharger" capable of spinning balls at dizzying speeds around an elevated track. Then there's a fully functional gear shift to replace the conventional ball shooter. Integrated into gameplay, the shift activates scoring features as well as maneuvers the player through a pedal-to-the metal video game mode car race, which goes full-throttle on Williams' dot matrix display.



The pin also adds such attention-grabbing extras as a rotating police beacon on top of the cabinet, a fully-operational traffic light, screaming sirens, roaring engines and a rousing musical score licensed from ZZ Top.

And the wheels have just started spinning. You'll also get three-ball multi-ball action, jackpots and super jackpots (capable of scoring up to 100 million points), a "free ride" for novice players who might lose a ball too quickly, "burn rubber" which awards 16 different values, a special Helicopter Bonus, Speed Millions, freeway loops, two-way combos, the "Supercharger" mode and the high-energy "Redline Mania" where players have a set time to rack up big points.

This Indy 500 of features didn't neglect the operators. *Getaway* marks the first appearance of the company's electronic flipper system, developed to ensure long-term performance and reliability. The pin also utilizes Tru-Pitch and a pivoting playfield design (incorporating a slide assembly) making playfield maintenance simple!

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Above: The group (almost 150 strong) gather for the welcome reception on the Carlton Hotel beach. **Below:** David Smith (Atari's Sales Director for Europe) welcomes the group to the French Riviera. The reason? To celebrate the firm's 20th anniversary!



ATARI'S RIVIERA RENDEZVOUS

industry's first video game factory marks 20th anniversary
dealers enjoy fun, sun & preview new games on French Riviera

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the product — and the company — that remade the coin machine business, Atari Games held its annual distributor meeting in one of the world's loveliest spots: in Cannes, along the French Riviera. The first-ever European-based meeting took place from April 29 to May 4, and it drew the best attendance by distributors ever! About 150 dealers and guests, including some 40 European dealers, gave the affair a truly international and distinguished flavor.

It was also plenty of fun. Atari's marketing director Mary Fujihara described the event as "non-stop dining, entertainment and sightseeing for five days. Trips to Nice, Monaco, ancient villages and even perfume factories made for a very busy week!" she added.

Dealers also got a look at how far Atari has come since its very first video two decades ago, *Pong*. (For a quick recap of Atari's history, please see the accompanying story.) The firm bowed two new products during a mid-week breakfast meeting: *Moto Frenzy*, a motorcycle racing simulator; and *Guardians of the 'Hood*, a dual-action fighting game.



Above: Wake-up call at the business meeting...that's Barry Schraier of Warehouse of Games & Vending (St. Louis) and Rosemary and Michael Solomon of AGI (Australia) in the front row.
Below: Tom Keil of Brady Distributing (Charlotte) takes a ride on *Moto Frenzy*.



NEW GAMES

Moto Frenzy will come in two configurations. The deluxe simulator is coin-op's first-ever "full motion motorcycle simulator," featuring a bike which customers sit on . . . a bike that can lean left and right, pivot to change directions, and even "pop a wheelie" to give the feel of a real bike.

Also available is a mini-deluxe version with two screens for head-to-head competition. Both versions feature motorized handlebar con-



In Place Massena fountain, Nice: Ed Hamowy, Executive VP with Time-Warner; David Griffiths, Brent Leisure (UK); Atari prexy Hide Nakajima; and Patrick Edwards, Brent Leisure.



At a local cafe: Central's Lou Singer, Atlas' Jerry Marcus, Atari's Jim Newlander, Shaffer's Steve Shaffer, Rowe's Jerry Gordon, Betson's Joe Cirillo and Birmingham Vending's Al Toronto.



In St. Paul de Vence, C.A. Robinson's Leah Bettelman and Central's Harriet Singer.

trols with a twist-grip throttle. The game includes six tracks to race on (players can select the one they want). The game ships this month.

Guardians of the 'Hood was featured on *RePlay's* March cover, but release was postponed until the Cannes meeting for some final tweaking. It's available as a kit (for two or three players simultaneously) or dedicated upright (for two players simultaneously). There is a special trade-in offer for *Pit Fighter,* which can easily be converted to *Guardians.* The game began shipping in May.

Gameplay is right in line with today's street market demands. *Guardians* features head-to-head fighting against a stationary background, and team-up action against enemies during sideways scrolling. A new five button control layout lets players control upper body, lower body, and special combination moves. Players select from up to seven characters, each with unique fighting skills and special "magic" powers.

ATARI®

TRADE TALK

During the whirlwind week in France, Atari staffers met individually with distributors, exchanging ideas for future products and industry direction. "These sessions are an important part of this annual event," noted Mary Fujihara. "They give our sales, marketing and engineering teams a chance to hear first-hand about the concerns and suggestions of our distributors."

The week wrapped up with a farewell banquet. Atari president Hide Nakajima thanked all the dealers for their many years of support and credited them for the firm's two decades of success. He also made a note of thanks to company founder Nolan Bushnell "for starting such a wonderful industry...and company."

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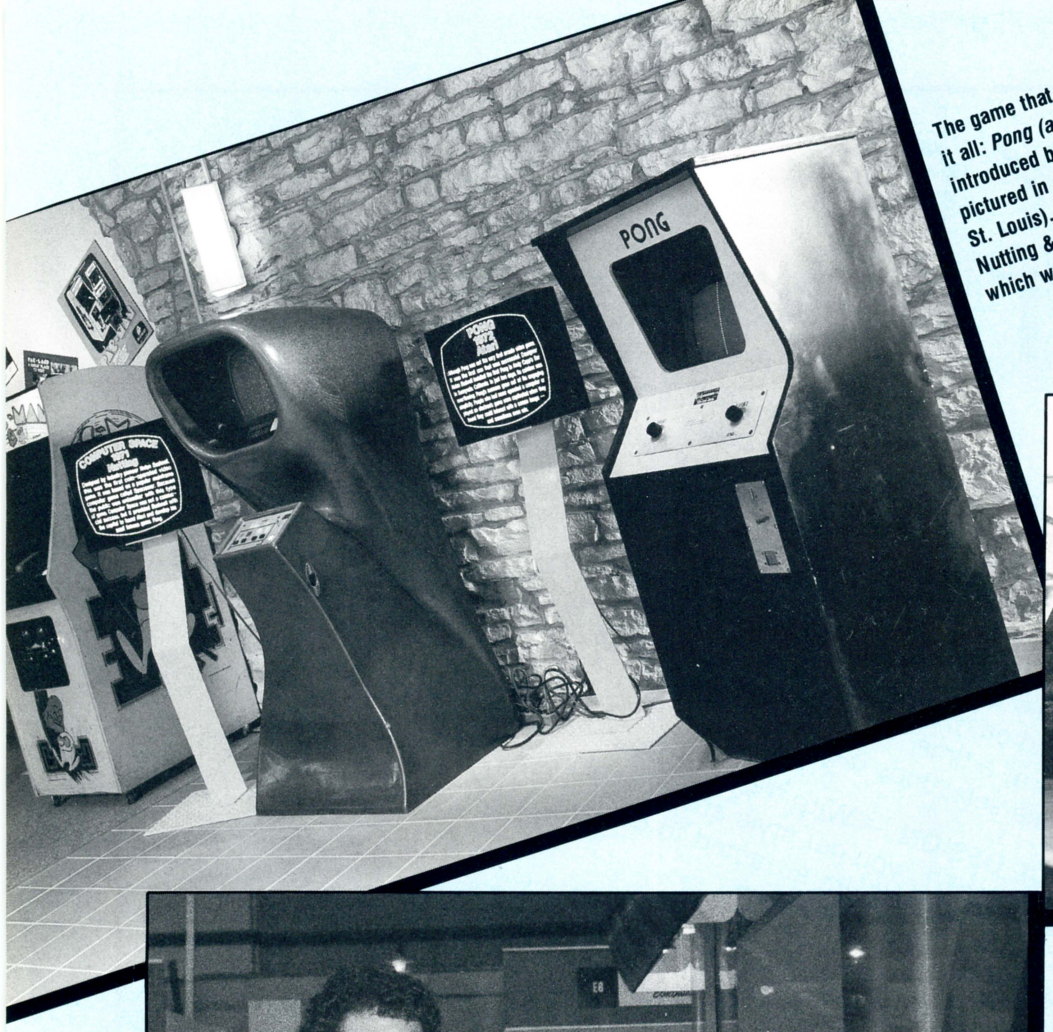


The game that started it all: *Pong (at right)*, introduced by Atari in 1972 (it's pictured in a video game museum in St. Louis). Next to it, none other than Nutting & Associate's *Computer Space*, which was the very first video game!



Atari founder Nolan Bushnell with his Chuck E. Cheeze mascot. Bushnell started the arcade chain shortly after Atari's acquisition by Warners (the chain was eventually taken over by Showbiz Pizza.



Frank Ballouz (left) and Gene Lipkin were a good one/two sales team in times gone by at Atari. At center is the late New York metro area dealer Al Simon (photo shot at an AMOA show).



Atari's table game *Football* was a big hit. During a special showing of the piece at C.A. Robinson's L.A. showrooms, the camera captures some faces associated with the company in 1978 (only one of which, Ira, still is). From left: Atari's Fred McCord, Frank Ballouz, Tom Petit (playing), Gene Lipkin, Ira Bettelman (of the distributorship) and the late Don Osborne (playing Petit).



Asteroids was indeed one of the greatest black/white monitor hits of all time. With it are Fred McCord (then service tech), Don Osborne and Tom Petit (now president of Sega USA).



Atari was quite involved in the 1982 Special Olympics for handicapped children (and brought in several games for the kids to compete on). Atari's late marketing veep Don Osborne is shown presenting a $2,500 check from the company to Olympic hero Rafer Johnson for the fund as actor Ron Masak watches at left.

THROUGH THE YEARS WITH ATARI

Atari, Inc. was incorporated exactly twenty years ago in June 1972 and the "name of its game" was *Pong*. With initial capital of $5,000, founder/inventor Nolan Bushnell turned this "mother of all video games" out to the market from a modest 1500-sq.-ft. facility in Santa Clara, Calif. Sales in excess of three million were attained that first fiscal year.

Pong, that black and white, two-player ping pong upright, may have launched the genre of video onto the coin-op amusement field, but it was not the first machine to sport a TV monitor. That was *Computer Space*, developed in part by Bushnell for his former employer Bill Nutting at Nutting Associates. But *Pong*, unlike the other, was a hit . . . not exactly a "hit" in the numbers of units built and sold by later "hit" standards . . . but a foresquare winner in taverns, and in some other street locations.

Atari would get the patent for this game years later, but its initial market success saw the birth of several copies by outside manufacturers. Not only was the video game revolution born but so was the rip-off business (although people didn't call it "rip-off" in those days). Suffice it to say that every company that copied *Pong* is out of business today.

In 1973, Atari bought Kee Games, Inc., made its owner, Joe Keenan, president and Bushnell, chairman. Kee maintained its own product line at its Sunnyvale, Calif. plant as an Atari division. Both plants turned out some decent new videos in those early times, Atari's *Tank* and *Sprint* being most significant winners. Corporate sales were in the $13 million range and they were proud to note that 10% of net sales were routinely plowed back into research and development funding.

In 1975, Atari created the home market by launching the home version of *Pong*. The success of this venture, combined with their continuing leadership in video games, caught the notice of Warner Communications, which acquired the company in 1976. The whole Atari organization moved into a complex of buildings in Moffett Park in Sunnyvale.



A dark moment in Atari's history occurred in 1982 in Chicago when a huge tournament held in conjunction with Tournament Games failed to amass all the promised prize money for winners. Atari came up with a substantial check to help set things right.

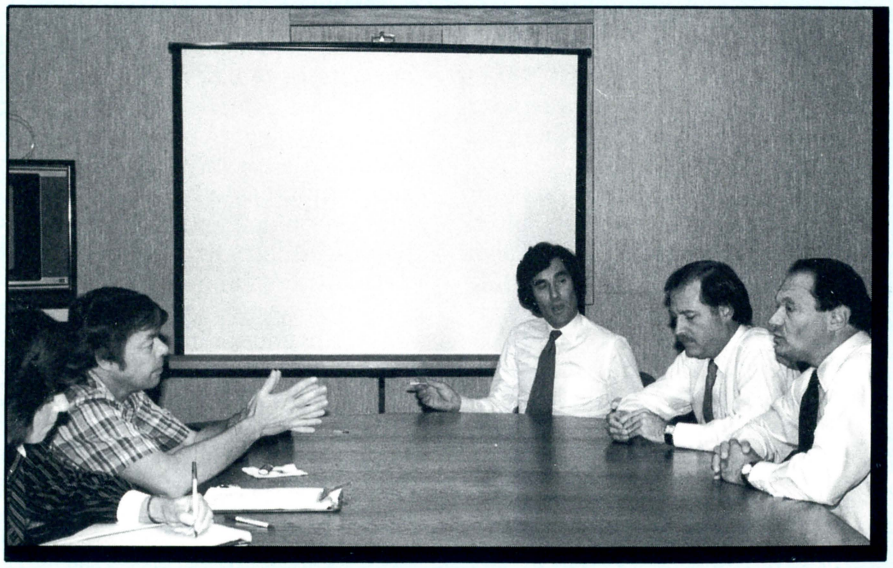


Atari president Ray Kassar and San Francisco Mayor Diane Feinstein celebrate the ringing of the bells during a ceremony in honor of restored cable cars. Atari donated money to the restoration drive.

Bushnell's original sales manager Pat Karns had been replaced by Gene Lipkin as Marketing VP, and the latter brought his friend Frank Ballouz up from Florida to serve as national sales topper for coin-op. Also in 1976, the company launched their first pinball called *Atarians*, one of the earlier solid state pins which was joined by some other Atari flippers in subsequent years. After their only critical hit in *Superman*, they exited this arm of the industry.

A multi-game video system called the *Model 2600* was launched in 1977 and helped create the first home vid boom (in years to follow, Atari also entered the home computer field with the models *400/800*). Meantime, their coin-op success story was still keen, with such hits as *Breakout, Starship, Football* and the giant *Asteroids* to their credit. *Asteroids* was one of the first to be dubbed a "godzilla" because the operator demand for the piece far exceeded the factory's ability to supply its distributors.

Atari participated greatly (and healthfully) in the fabled "video game boom" which ran roughly from 1980 to 1982 with such pieces as *Missile Command, Centipede,* and *Pole Position.* During the "boom" (greatly influenced by such competitive machines as Taito's *Space Inva-*



RePlay's **Kathy Brainard and Eddie Adlum (left) quiz the big three at Atari coin's Milpitas factory for an unusual three-subject interview of John Farrand, Don Osborne and Jerry Marcus (now prexy of Atlas/Chicago).**

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Shaking hands in front of *Star Wars* (brought to market in 1983) are Atari coin chief John Farrand (left) and the late Al Bettelman, one of the video company's biggest distributors.



Luxembourg's Crown Prince Henri shakes hands with Atari's coin-op division president John Farrand during a February 1983 visit to the Atari plant. The prince went home with a *Millipede* video game.

ders), annual player expenditures on video games were considered higher than the combined gross revenues from both records and movies. Video was king of the entertainment hill.

After the video slide became apparent to one and all by 1984, Warner Communications sold both the home computer and home video divisions to a new company that adopted the name Atari Corporation (Bushnell had since exited the company to be replaced by Ray Kassar). In 1985, the coin-op division adopted a new corporate structure and called itself by its present name, Atari Games Corp.

In 1986, the company was coming off its super-successful *Gauntlet* and followed it up with *Road Blasters* and *Super Sprint,* among other pieces. *Road Blasters* came out in 1987 and late that year, Atari Games got back into the again-flourishing home video business (dominated by Nintendo) by creating its Tengen, Inc. division.

Cyberball showed up in 1988, followed afterward by such hits as *Hard Drivin'* (1989), *Pit Fighter* (1990), *Race Drivin'* (1990), *Steel Talons* (1991) and this year's *Road Riot.* It was never uncommon for Atari to sport many titles on trade magazine charts as they no doubt do on the chart in this very issue.

Atari Games today is a privately-owned California corporation with a majority interest still held by Warners (now called Time-Warner, Inc.). They have made their headquarters in Milpitas, Calif., since around 1986 and continue to maintain an additional factory in Tipperary, Ireland.

The company sells its products through approximately 80 coin-op distributors here and overseas, most of which were represented at the early May Riviera celebration including some which have handled the line practically since the very beginning . . . a line that's been very good for them and (obviously) especially good for the industry in general.

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coin mechanism: electronical or mechanical
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Mario & Luigi plumb the depths of another world: pinball! licensed Nintendo characters star in new Premier flipper



Premier Technology is enjoying its best pinball success in years with *Super Mario Bros.*, featuring the famous Italian plumber characters licensed from Nintendo. The game started shipping in mid-April and, according to Premier's amusement game division chief Mike Vrettos, "It's being received extremely well. Earnings are 20 to 30% higher than our *Surfing Safari,* which was our best previous title to date. In fact, our field reports say the cash box for *Mario* is out-performing just about every pin on the market, except for the absolute top-charted flipper. We're very pleased!"

What accounts for the game's popularity? A blend of quality game design and world-famous licensed theme. In recent times, Premier's been working very hard to increase playfield fun, as well as "under the hood" reliability. Now those efforts are really paying off. In addition, "The characters of Mario and Luigi have unique entertainment value," Mike Vrettos pointed out. "Their appeal stretches across different ages and they are equally popular with males and females. It's not a fad or a flash in the pan. Mario is one of the top five recognized characters in the world."

The pin lets players join the super duo as they travel through seven worlds of excitement, trying to rescue a princess from an animated castle. Outstanding features include a full-sized dot matrix display in the backbox (a first for Premier), a spectacular light show when the player becomes "Super Mario," a quick shot on "Yoshi's Ramp," a cave full of "Hidden Treasures," and a powerful new sound system. A free parts kit, worth about $200 at retail, is offered with each kit.

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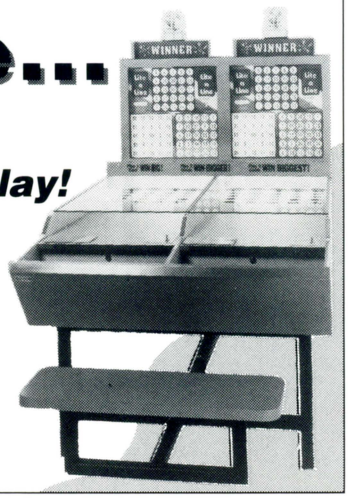

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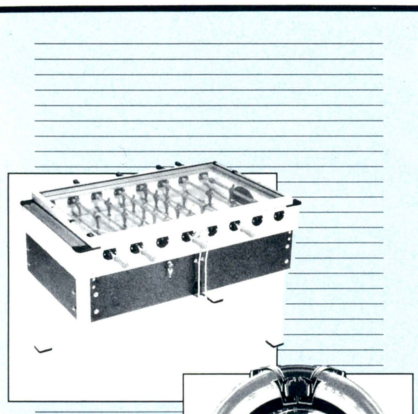

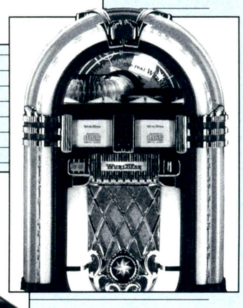



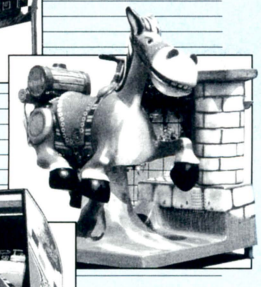

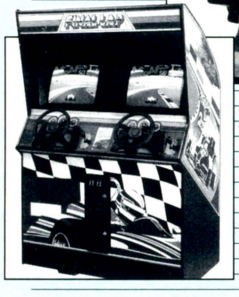

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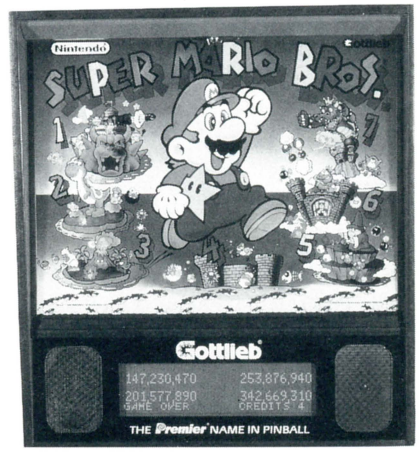

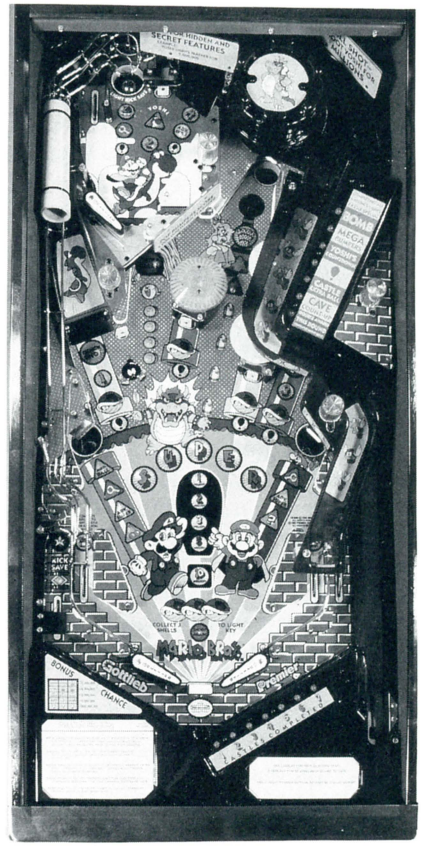

and one that Premier can justly be proud of. The timing is right, too: all of the U.S. flipper factories are putting out good titles now, said Mike Vrettos, and pinball is enjoying super-strong sales and earnings around the world. "The pinball market is going crazy right now," he said. "That's not only here and in Europe, but South America is also opening up. In this climate, we anticipate that we'll keep building and selling *Super Mario Bros.* for some time to come, probably through September. . . and maybe even beyond!"

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Yo Joe! COBRA is up to its slimy tricks once again. They are planning world domination through mass terrorism. The team forces must unite to advance and stop the menace of COBRA in **G.I. Joe,** the new video game adventure from **Konami.**

Team **G.I. Joe** members Duke, Road Block, Snake-Eyes, and Scarlett have their work cut out for them. They have been individually trained in specialized military areas. Snake-Eyes is a mystical martial arts master, most dangerous when he is unarmed and cornered. Road Block is a heavy machine gunner who is also adept at hand-to-hand combat. Scarlett, whose strength is military intelligence, is no wimp when it comes to kicking butt. Duke, trained in close range fighting, is looked upon as the guidance counselor, big brother, and offensive coach to the G.I. Joe unit. Together they get tough on the ruthless Cobra Commander and his sleazy Cobra Vipers and Toxo-Vipers.

After attacking big cities, COBRA begins to spread mass destruction and chaos. G.I. Joe must destroy the chemical plant to rid the world of COBRA's toxic terror tactics. They advance through to the Air Base where Cobra Commander's dive-bonbing planes, helicopters, tanks, and legions of soldiers are ready for battle. Then it's showtime at COBRA's weapons plant, where the high-tech, destructive arms are being manufactured. When the weapons plant is destroyed, Cobra Commander threatens to launch powerful missiles, targeted at cities all over the world, unless G.I. Joe lays down its arms. G.I. Joe, never surrendering, searches through the depths of the jungle for COBRA's secret military base.

Once they find the base, where COBRA is storing the deadly missiles, G.I. Joe fights through it to the ultimate showdown with Cobra Commander. It's time for G.I. Joe to get down and dirty, and show COBRA how tough they really are. Join the ranks of a fearless team—**G.I. Joe,** a real American hero!

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REDEMPTION & ARCADES: IT WAS MEANT TO BE!



Coin-op cranes go back at least to the 1920s, but redemption as we know it today is marking its 35th anniversary. Back in '57, the state of New Jersey legalized play-for-prize games on the famed Jersey Shore. The boardwalk there soon blossomed with arcade after arcade, each offering cranes, skill games and other machines vending tickets and tokens. (Amusement slots and pokers were eventually allowed, too.) A glance at the above picture will give you an idea of what the Wildwood boardwalk, just south of Atlantic City, looked like in 1985 . . . just when the rest of trade truly awakened to the "call of redemption."

Anybody who saw the Jersey Shore operations had to be impressed. Here was a form of pure amusement, completely legal, American as apple pie, that made big profits and gave players big smiles. You'd think every other market would have duplicated the Jersey setup as fast as possible. And you'd be wrong.

Turns out, the redemption concept didn't "travel" very well for a long time. Redemption was difficult to describe to somebody who hadn't seen it. Also, for many years the experts weren't sure whether redemption was okay for other jurisdictions. Besides, the trade was caught up in music, pins and then video.

When video dipped 10 years ago, some Northeastern tradesters decided it was time to take the redemption concept national. Times had changed, state laws were clearer and less restrictive, and the industry was ready to try something new. They started with cranes . . . quietly at first, as far away as Southern California. Some were imported from Spain or Belgium. The next thing you know, cranes were hot. Everybody wanted one, everybody made one. By 1989 *RePlay* cataloged some 40 different models, built by nearly as many factories.

Any fad that hot can't last, and some predicted that cranes would be gone and forgotten in a year. Well, many of the 40 models did fade, but quite a few remained and along came rotary merchandisers. Then came basketball games, then novelties, skill games, golf putters, ball toss games, all vending tickets. Suddenly, the trade learned a new word called "redemption" which tied together all these new games (plus classics like *Skee Ball* that had been around for years) into one nice, neat concept.

The early "prophets" of redemption claimed it was a staple, something timeless that would always earn, always draw a crowd. Many listened, shrugged and said they were just carnival barkers hyping their products. But then major arcades began to embrace the concept: first in the U.S., then around the world. Redemption was saving arcades . . . nearly saving the industry, some said. Now, of course, it's 1992 and we know who got the last laugh. From Belgium to Tokyo, from arcades to the street, everybody wants to be part of redemption.

This month, *RePlay* salutes arcades and redemption alike. We profile some key redemption factories and their latest products; we look at some new redemption entries. We examine the place of redemption in a growing kiddie arcade chain and we look at a "grandaddy of pocket parks" which is taking that particular concept worldwide as well. Happy reading!

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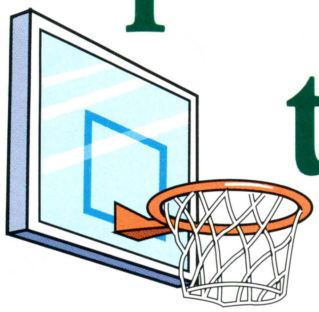

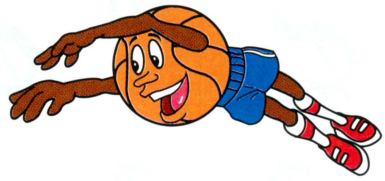

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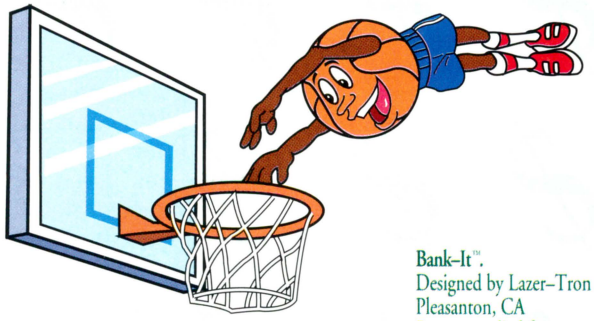

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READY TO GROW

with 5 successful stores so far, Fun Time Corp. eyes expansion; targets kiddie & family market with stress on redemption games

Quality sells. That's the guiding philosophy behind Fun Time Pizza, a small Dallas-based chain of five family entertainment centers that's aiming for dramatic national (and even international) expansion. Targeting the under-10 crowd and their parents, Fun Time takes the classic "kiddie arcade/pizza restaurant" idea and raises it to new heights. Each store is 12,000 sq. ft. and represents a million dollar investment. The firm expects 1992 revenues to top $4 million.

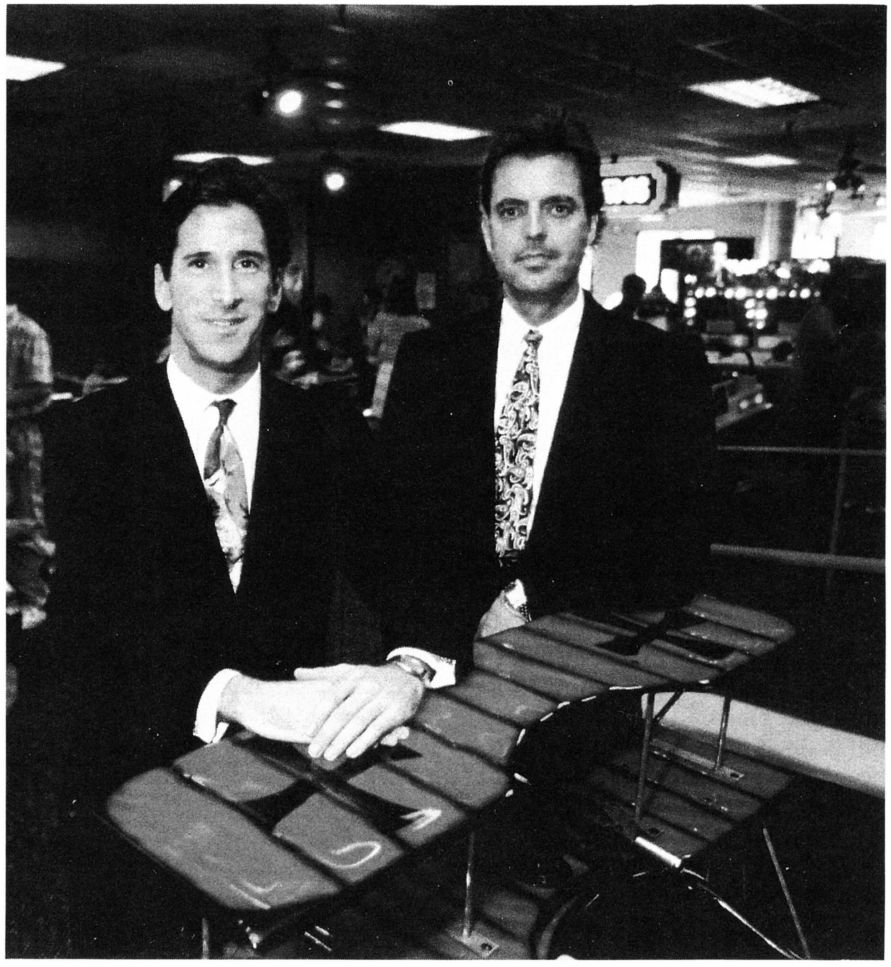
"We believe people respond to a complete corporate concept, with unified management, theme and



Above and below: A look at one of the Fun Time Pizza locations. The quality center is one of five, though the company has a keen eye on expansion, both nationally and internationally.



style for everything from carpet to pizzas and uniforms," stated Andrew Adler, the youthful president of Fun Time Pizza Corp. "The immediate impression is that we have a national company. That's quite different from casual operators who think they can succeed by putting up four walls and throwing in some games. People feel and sense the difference when an outfit is really professional, responsible and customer-oriented."



Fun Time Pizza Corp. President Andrew Adler and Chief Financial Officer Alan McDonald.

Based on four careful years of testing and refinement, Fun Time says it's going from three corporate stores in Texas (plus two licensees) to 15 stores by the end of next year. The Northeast and the Southwest are Fun Time's initial target areas. Beyond that, Fun Time hopes to keep expanding nationwide at about 15 corporate-owned stores per year for several years, with all tied by computer into central headquarters where Adler and chief financial officer Alan McDonal run the show. In addition, franchise expansion may also begin next year.

The plan sounds bold, but Andrew Adler says it's backed by solid research and a strong capital structure. "We didn't want to expand rapidly," he emphasized. "After building our first store in 1988, we waited two full years for performance before building our second store. Then we waited another year before building our third store. Now we're four years old and have comfortable understanding of seasonal and annual revenues. We have developed highly detailed operations manuals and management procedures, too. All in all, we're very confident that we can sustain that kind of growth."

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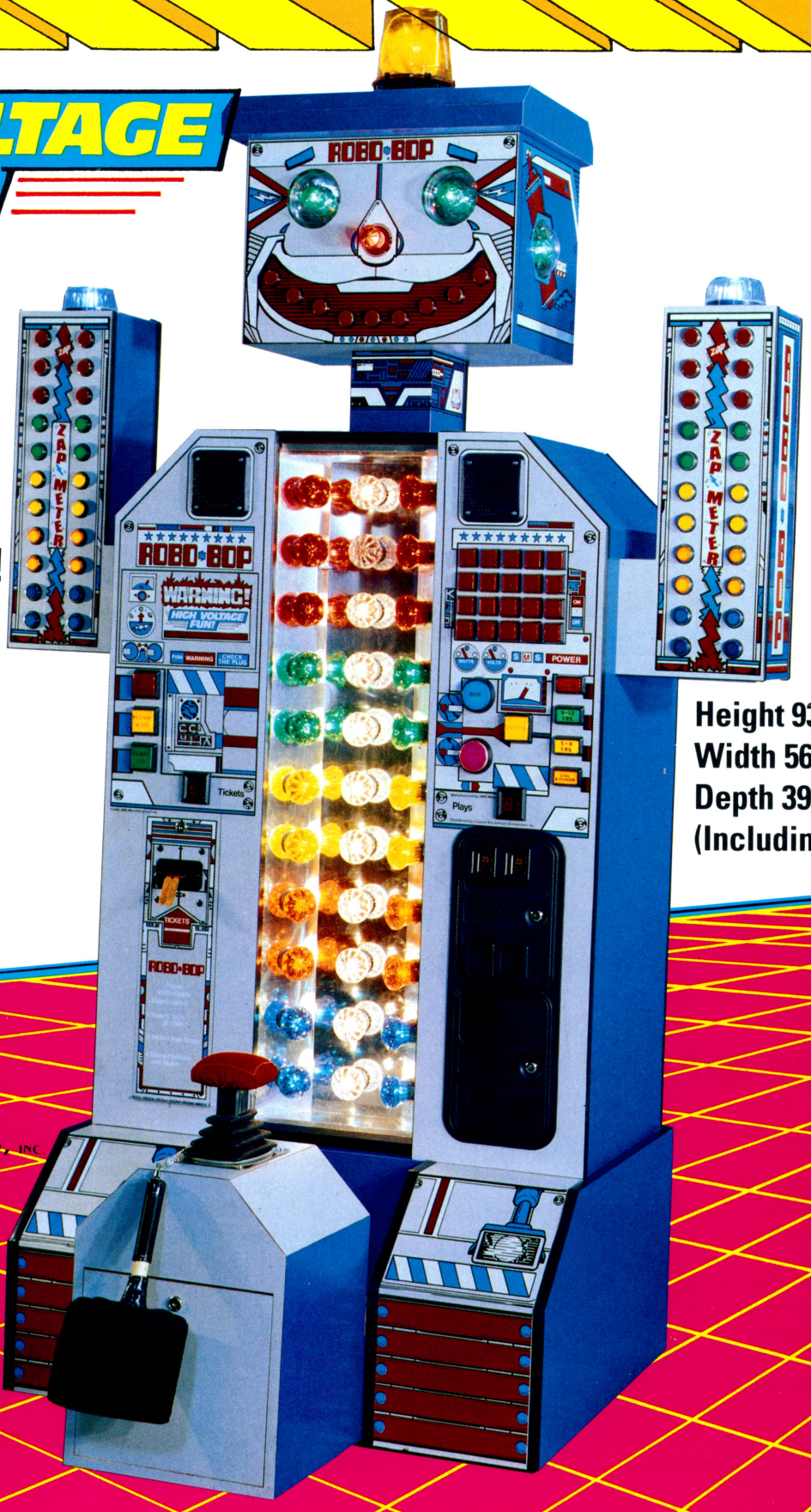

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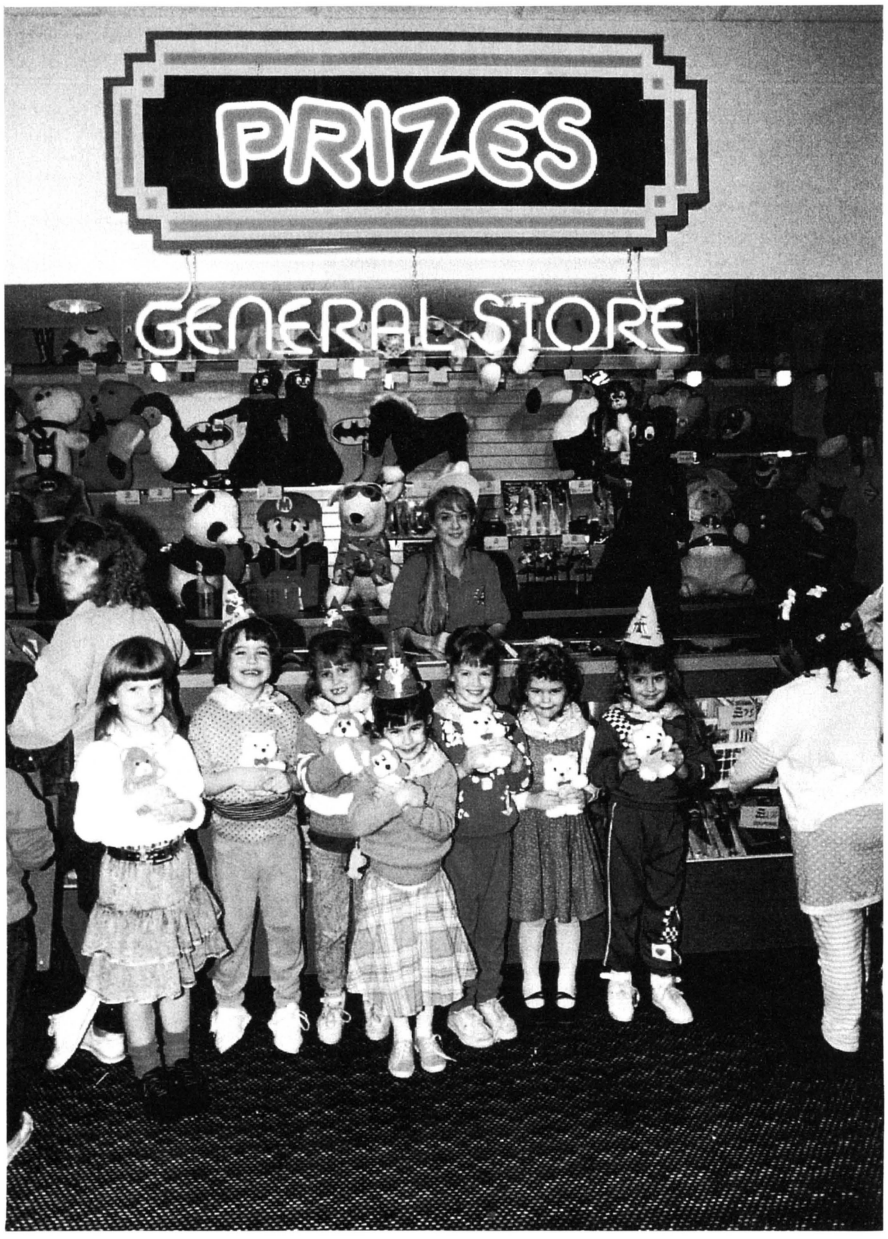

Are these kids having fun? You betcha! These birthday party-girls smile pretty in front of the neat-o redemption counter, complete with great graphics and decor including neon signage.

NOT JUST A VIDEO ARCADE

Attracting families with young children is one secret of Fun Time's success. "We target an under-10 age bracket," Andrew Adler explained. "In fact, we don't allow teens in without parents because we don't want that element to overwhelm young kids. Unlike a normal video arcade, we concentrate predominately on redemption, with 82 to 85% of our space devoted to redemption and kiddie rides."

Game purchase is an area of special care. "We're very selective about game manufacturers," Adler said. "Redemption is a technical specialty and factories need that expert knowledge. We lean toward classic pieces with long-term appeal like *Skee Ball* and we don't change redemption equipment very frequently. We try to introduce a few new pieces every year to keep the variety up, but since we concentrate on the under-10 crowd it's not a major concern. If a four-year-old has been riding the Red Baron airplane for a couple of years, he wants to keep riding it! Even with video, considering our customer base we don't have to update our video games more than every six months."

Fun Time goes to great lengths to keep games running 100% of the time. "We have massive crowds coming through here on weekends, so we can't afford any down time at all," Adler declared. "We're so sensitive about games being down that we have an on-site technician in every store. Sometimes we're tempted to use cutting-edge new redemption equipment, but our need for reliability is so great that we often wait until a game proves itself. Most of our maintenance problems are the usual ticket and token mechanisms which always seem to go down. By the way, we're looking for well-rounded techs who understand robotics, video and redemption!"

Besides active games and rides, Fun Time offers passive entertainment in the form of an animated theater with robotic characters. Not a new concept, but Fun Time has added a new wrinkle. The characters have new songs every month, including the latest hit from Madonna and other Top 10 artists, as well as country tunes for various regions.

CLEAN AND SAFE

Like all of the very top customer service firms in any industry, Fun Time puts great emphasis on creating a clean, safe, friendly environment. That's easy to say, but it comes down to a thousand little details . . . and Fun Time pays attention to all of them. "We believe that attention to detail is what set us apart," Adler said. "We strive to give customers a different level of service than children's industry is used to. When you think about it, the factor that really separates McDonald's from every other hamburger chain is the environment and the atmosphere, not the product."

For example, Fun Time is a stickler for cleanliness. "Our standards of cleanliness are beyond reasonable," Adler smiled. "After all, we know kids will crawl around on the floor; it's natural. We want our stores to be clean enough that when parents see a two-year-old on the floor, they feel it's okay because the carpet is absolutely spotless. We're almost fanatical about it, with people going around constantly with brooms and Windex. That's critical.

MELODY MOUSE



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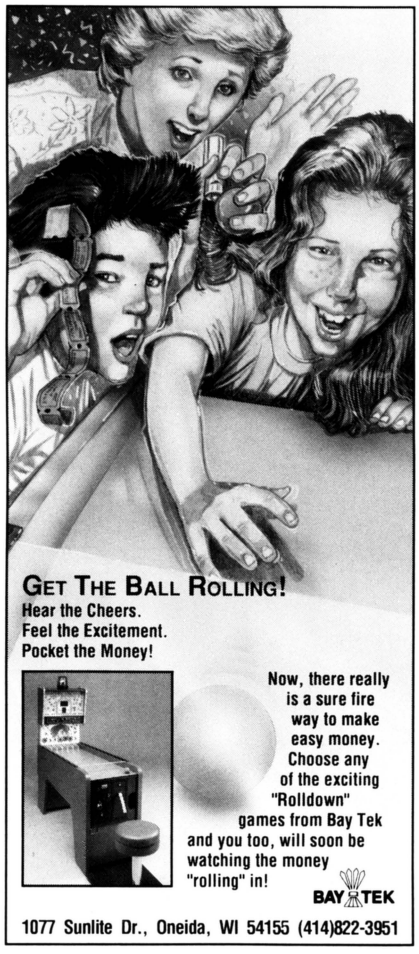

Dirty family amusement centers have created a seedy image in the past, and making an effort in this area helps customers feel much better about bringing their children to this kind of place."

A prominent stress on safety also helps parents feel comfortable in Fun Time stores. "We have in-store computerized announcements about safety," Adler explained. "Announcements come on every two minutes reminding people to follow instructions, use seat belts, not run, and so on. We use the slogan, 'A safe time is a fun time.' We figure if parents know we care about this, they'll trust us more with their family."

Fun Time's "quality" philosophy shows up in their food offerings, too. The importance of good food is underrated by many arcades, Adler believes. "We can't deliver gourmet pizza," he said, "but we try to get as close as we can with the best tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese that we can deliver in a commercial product. Sad to say, many businesses which cater to children don't care about quality because they believe kids don't discriminate and so they can get away with it."

PERSONAL ATTENTION TO CUSTOMERS

Attentiveness to customers is another area where Fun Time tries to set itself apart. "If a child is walking out after a party with presents, a manager will help carry the gifts out to the car," Andrew Adler stated. "The same is true for an older person in a wheelchair. We have three or four attendants circulating in our gameroom to help, not just one. If a child is not succeeding with a game, the attendant will stop and use a complementary token to show the child how to play, because we want kids to enjoy the game and play it again, not become frustrated and unhappy."

Adults get kid-glove treatment, too. "My partner and I visit the stores almost every week," Adler said. "We contact customers ourselves directly, by writing letters and phone calls. We ask what their experiences in our stores was and believe that you have to keep in touch. I see and respond personally to every suggestion card or cus-

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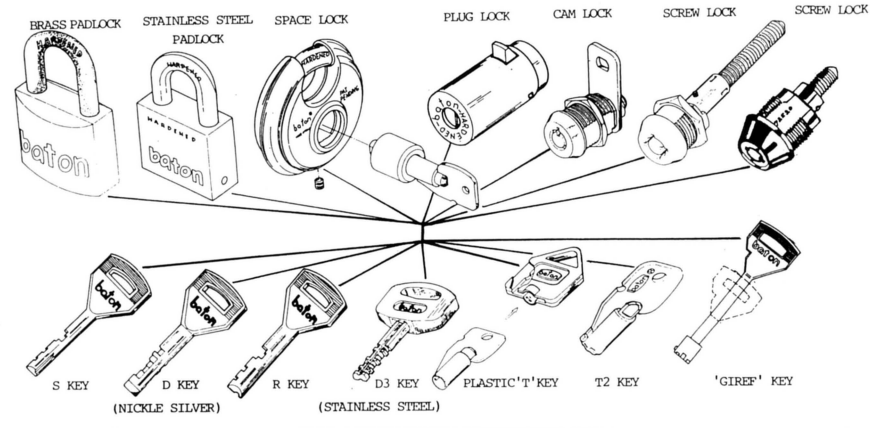

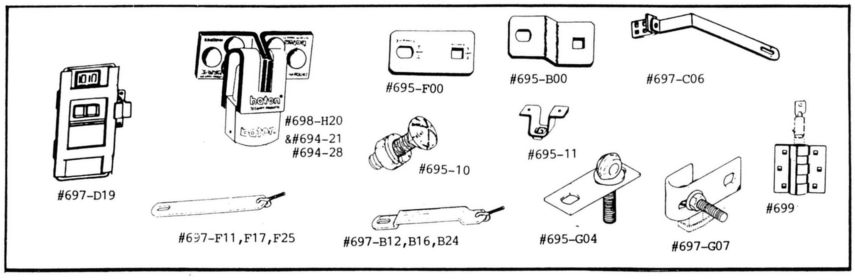

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tomer complaint, often with a coupon for a free visit. We tell our staff that the customer is always right . . . even when he's wrong!"

COMPETITION AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fun Time admits that some established kiddie arcades have already defined their market, but believes there's room for competition. "Today you're seeing a lot of independents coming up and trying to do the job better," Adler stated. "Families are demanding that operators do the job better, because if you don't they have a choice of other places to go."

One area they're not worried about is the current boom in "pocket parks," places combining coin-op with major attractions like mini-golf, go-karts or water slides. "When a pocket park opened next to us, we learned their stores are really catering to a different age bracket than we are. Parents with kids under 10 want them in an enclosed environment where they can keep an eye on them, and where the entertainment will divert the children for a couple of hours . . . not all afternoon or all day. Places with bigger outdoor attractions bring in the 10- to 15-year-olds. Often little kids think they'd like that, but they can't drive a race car or putt a golf ball with real skill yet."

The Fun Time concept does work surprisingly well with bowling, said Adler. A pilot project with a Fair Lanes, Inc. bowling alley (one of a national chain of 125 bowling centers) proved to be "a match made in heaven," he said. "The store volume they achieved was greater than our own stand-alone stores. They basically doubled the revenues of a typical bowling center. We may do more projects with Fair Lanes, or they may decide to create their own concept, but either way we think it's an exciting program and we're looking for more bowling centers that want to enter franchise agreements."

READY TO GROW

Based on careful planning, solid financing and four years' experience, Fun Time says it's now ready to take its concept national. Any limit on growth, said Andrew Adler, is a matter of personnel, more than money or locations. "You can always build stores faster than you can train good managers," he said. "That is the major factor that must determine your growth rate. I tell our managers, 'Until you develop strong people below you who can take your job, we don't grow.'"

The partners who own and run Fun Time know plenty about management skills. Andrew Adler, a graduate civil engineer, previously managed the Texas operations for The Webb Companies, one of the country's largest diversified development firms (no relation to *RePlay* editor Marcus Webb). CFO Alan McDonald is a CPA previously employed with Laventhol and Horwath, a nationally recognized accounting firm, and possesses detailed knowledge of real estate and restaurant operations.

Fun Time Corp. is headquartered at 2911 Turtle Creek, Ste. 1250, Dallas, TX 75219. Their phone is 214/740-0000.

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Gary Rudolph, Operations VP and game buyer for Malibu Grand Prix, with the new fleet of Virage and Grand-Virage race cars in pit row at the firm's newest location, Malibu Grand Prix Toulouse France. The park opened to rave reviews in April '92.

MALIBU (FRANCE) GRAND PRIX

Malibu Grand Prix revs up for new frontiers; Georgia showcase followed by new French site

Quick, name a very successful American theme park entertainment company with decades of worldwide expansion. Need a hint? They just opened their first European park in France.

No, we're not talking about Euro Disneyland. We're talking about Malibu Grand Prix Corp.! Based in Canoga Park, Calif., the firm specializes in "pocket theme parks" that combines deluxe go-karts (scaled-down formula one race cars) with coin-operated arcades and mini-golf. Founded in 1974, Malibu is approaching its 20th anniversary. They're going strong with 36 corporate-owned parks in the U.S. In addition, two licensed parks are running in Japan and 20 more are planned there. One licensed facility is operating in Taiwan (with a second coming this year). In addition, Malibu just opened its very first European site in Toulouse, France; it's corporate-owned with a minority interest owned by local business partners.

"Despite an economy that has forced many entertainment companies to downsize, diversify, or even go out of business, Malibu Grand Prix continued to grow in 1991 and plans major expansion in 1992 and beyond," said execs. Malibu says it's achieved new profits and sales records every year since 1984. Their most important new U.S. site opened last November in Atlanta, featuring racing, mini-golf, a bumper boat pond, batting cages, a video arcade, party room and restaurant. This facility will be the model for future European sites.

Owned since 1984 by Canadian real estate developer Ira Young, Malibu is now under the leadership of president Don Parmiter. The firm has 15,000 sq. ft. of office space in Canoga Park, plus a 35,000-sq.-ft. R&D center in nearby Warner Center where the firm designs, assembles and tests its Virage and Sprint car models.

Does all this sound out of reach for the average operator? Maybe not. Malibu Grand Prix was originally a single site, founded in 1974 by three firemen.

THAT'S THE TICKET!

from fighter planes to church mice, fun is the keynote of redemption games from Coastal Amusement Distributors

Some of the season's hottest new redemption games come from the specialists at Coastal Amusement Distributors. With 20 years' experience in this market, company president Len Dean says his experienced team is dedicated to creating and offering the best possible games to the industry...and the firm's growing lineup of equipment proves Len means what he says! In addition to popular classics like *Pop-A-Ball* and state-of-the-art knockouts like *Robo Bop,* Coastal's line now includes some brand new pushers, skill games and kiddie rides that will do any redemption location proud.

POP-A-SLOT

In the tradition of Coastal's successful *Pop-A-Ball* and *Pop-A-Tac-Toe* series is the firm's latest entry, *Pop-A-Slot.* It can be played as a random-action game or (operator's option) as a "play till you win/win every time" game. This amusement skill game successfully combines hi-tech video and dependable mechanical design. Players deposit coins and press "pop" buttons. Three bouncing balls then land in any of the 25 target holes. This selection is displayed on the video monitor. Players may then keep their first "pop" or selectively discard one of the three symbols.

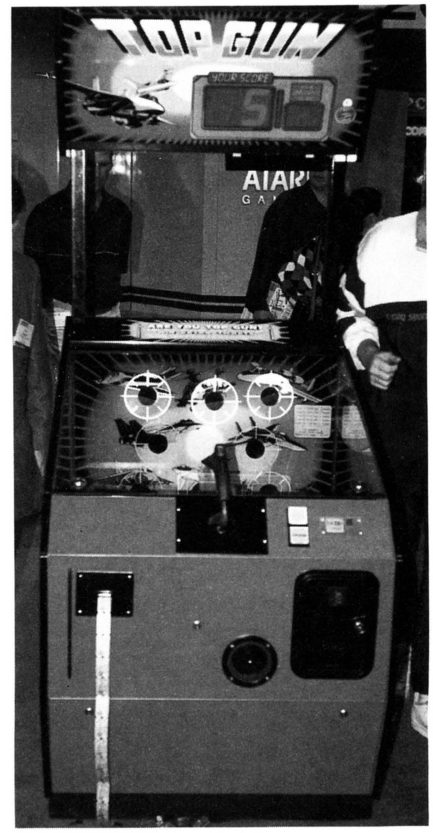
"It's worked well in different types of markets," said Coastal's Bob Keelyn. "Since we marry video with electromechanics, we have the ability to offer various types of operation. Locations that want 'win every time' operation can use it and locations that want random action style are also happy with it." Pricing, ticket award levels, and "play till you win" features are all operator-adjustable. Standard features include ticket dispense, sound and attract light. Cabinet dimensions are 30" long by 26" wide by 71" high.





MELODY MOUSE

Some of the most fun redemption games test the player's hand-eye coordination, and *Melody Mouse* is a cute, creatively-themed example of this type. Balls rise to the top of a vertical playfield, then fall. Players attempt to release the falling balls into a fixed row of tubes (which look like the pipes of an organ). The more consecutive tubes filled, the higher the ticket reward. Challenging to play? You bet! The game comes in a mahogany wood grain



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cabinet with excellent graphics, sound and music which add to the appeal. The base stands 28" square and rises 78" high. Ticket dispenser and adjustable award levels are standard.

TOP GUN

Fast-paced and exciting, *Top Gun* is a skill redemption novelty game, manufactured by Harry Levy Amusement (Great Britain) and exclusively marketed by Coastal. Players can compete with each other or against the machine as they shoot air-filled balls into a bullseye. Both players shoot for the same target, which lights up when it's time to fire. The cabinet is a mockup of a fighter jet cockpit and the vertically-mounted playfield offers eight target holes with silhouette helicopters and fighter planes. Players use a firing joystick to aim and release the balls. The first player to get a ball through the target scores the point. Realistic sound effects makes the experience even more fun, while an attractive lighted sign help pull new players to the game.



Play continues until time expires; ticket reward levels depend on points scored. Standard features include ticket dispenser and adjustable coin pricing. Operators can adjust playing time and award levels. The game stands 75" long by 33" wide by 47" high (with top sign, height is 80").

MARDI GRAS

Yet another of Coastal's exclusive imports from Harry Levy is *Mardi Gras*, the latest in redemption coin pushers. Four players may enjoy the four-sided unit, which vends tickets or tokens. Three bonus slides are located on the left, right and center of the playfield, giving players a chance to use skill and aim their coin to each area of the playfield by one of the three fixed coin entries per station. The popular "ticket every time" option is operator-adjustable.

Standard features include a full anti-cheat package, tilt alarm and no award until further coin is inserted. Fully metered, the game includes a musical attract mode and exceptional graphics and lighting (players will be drawn to this one from a distance!). Dimensions are 60" long by 60" wide by 81" high.

For more information about these and many other products, contact Coastal Amusement Distributors at 908/905-6662.

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the Big Ticket

Be Your Own Expert

Some four years ago I was fortunate enough to have been given the opportunity to write this column for *RePlay*. The purpose of the column was to educate the industry about the proper operation of a good redemption arcade and entertainment center. The industry had just finished savoring and digesting the flavor of profitable merchandisers (cranes and rotaries) and was catching the aroma of ticket-award skill games.

Before that time, most parts of the country (and the world for that matter) had only seen this type of equipment when a traveling show or carnival visited their town. Even then, the skill games required attendants to give out prizes. Redemption arcades prospered mainly in seashore New Jersey towns, where their popularity peaked in the fifties. And although pinball and mechanical games were found in city locations, people were attracted to the Jersey shore communities for a day of fun in the sun. In the evening, families went to the Boardwalk. Rides, food and games became their night of entertainment and all went home with a prize. For the next 15 years, my friends at the Jersey shore taught me about redemption. This is where my education began.

My career in this industry has been a fascinating one. I learned not only about equipment, or prize selection, but also the psychology behind what motivates these people to play the games.

Extending beyond the Shore, redemption games, as a nationwide phenomenon, have now come alive. Today, redemption is recognized not just as a passing fad, but a permanent part of coin-op. Several video game manufacturers have introduced redemption equipment, when in the past they just hoped it would go away.

With all this attention and excitement comes new experts. These experts have received their MIR degrees (Masters in Redemption), and are ready to teach what they know. They write articles, give seminars, etc. about the proper operation of redemption equipment.

Much of this education has been invaluable, but here as everywhere else the customer needs to be discriminating. All that is preached may not be gospel. Several controversial stances have been presented this past year, and sometimes the "big picture" has been missed.

Examples of the latest redemption advice include the following:

1. *Devalue tickets from the current one-cent cash value to one-half or three-fourths of a cent.* Okay, but the other side of the coin results in doubling the number of points needed to win that special prize. I don't want to suggest that this alternative point value is wrong. I just want the reader to be aware that with this system a player may need 750 to 1,000 points for a prize that used to cost 500 points.

2. *Increase the cash value of a ticket to two-three-five, etc. cents.* The reverse holds true for the above. If a two-cent point value is used, only half the number of tickets are awarded by the games. Perhaps a better approach would be to use the same one-cent point value — making a two-point ticket worth two cents (faster games with little entertainment value will issue these tickets, reducing the percentage of award slightly.) Remember when you increase the value of your ticket, the player will receive less tickets and may think they're not winning as much.

3. *Don't mark up the merchan-*

dise. This may hold true in most situations; however, it should not be conceived as a rule of thumb. Perceived value and retail sale prices should be used as a guideline. Supply and demand may also dictate the number of points needed to win a particular prize.

4. *Only award a particular percentage on a particular type of game.* Each establishment differs. Competition may be keen in your area, or completely absent, so your particular market should dictate this.

What I'm saying here is you must be your own businessman. Even the best experts can only offer guidelines, not absolute truths. In some cases, you may have even more experience than they do.

When I began writing this column, I was asked to present objective articles and not use the column as a "Coin Concepts platform." I have faithfully adhered to this request. This column always asks you, the reader, to analyze information when you get it...from "The Big Ticket" or from any other source. Ask yourself, is the information presented self-serving for the writer? Is the writer being objective? Is the writer truly qualified to pick the best games? Or, does the cash box still rule? Why would someone steer you towards this game or that merchandise? Are the conclusions logical and cost-effective?

My point here is simple: think things through yourself! The final judge is, and always will be, the cash box. Analyze the information given and consider the source. If you intend to follow an expert's suggestion, check with the expert and ask for a reference. Investigate!

This will be my last article until September. I wish you all a successful season, and remember to think redemption!

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HOP, HOP, HOPPIN' ALONG



Ribbit! Meltec has another winner with 'The Great Frog Race'; simple gameplay, quality construction give universal appeal

Nearly every time a *RePlay* reporter enters an arcade, we see a parent and child playing a Meltec gun game. And, they always seem to sit there and play the same game over and over as long as we're in the location! It just goes to show, the most successful redemption manufacturers got that way by specializing in a certain kind of game, then building the best versions they possibly could.

For Meltec (San Jose, Calif.), the specialty is big gun games. Over the years, they've earned a reputation for offering players a unique experience...and providing operators with a top-quality, long-lived product.

As the summer season gets underway, it's time to rack up yet another hit for Meltec. Sales of *The Great Frog Race,* their latest game, are rivaling the company's all-time biggest hit, *Big Mouth.* In fact, thanks in part to the success of *Frog Race,* the company is enjoying one of its best years ever.

"At this point, our sales are equaling our best year which was 1991," said Meltec president Jon McEwan. "Most of that is due to the domestic market. We started getting a lot of sales and activity even before ACME. Since we've come back form the show, we have had all kinds of business. *The Great Frog Race* was the top test piece in some of our initial locations and we've had some strong reorders from distributors. Operators are continuing to make a serious investment in redemption."

Gameplay for *The Great Frog Race* is simple and fun. One or two players sit down at a counter where each is equipped with a big "cannon" type gun. The gun shoots balls at a big, open-mouthed frog on the backboard. Each time the wagging tongue in the frog's mouth is hit, a

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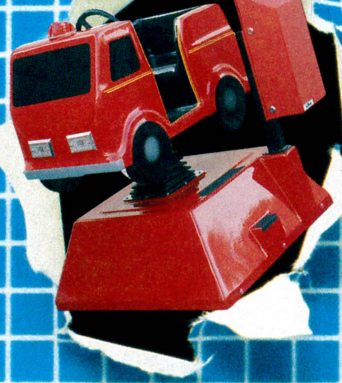

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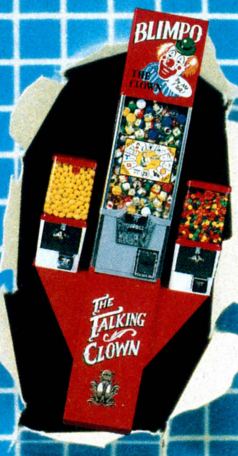

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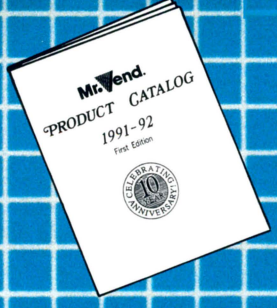

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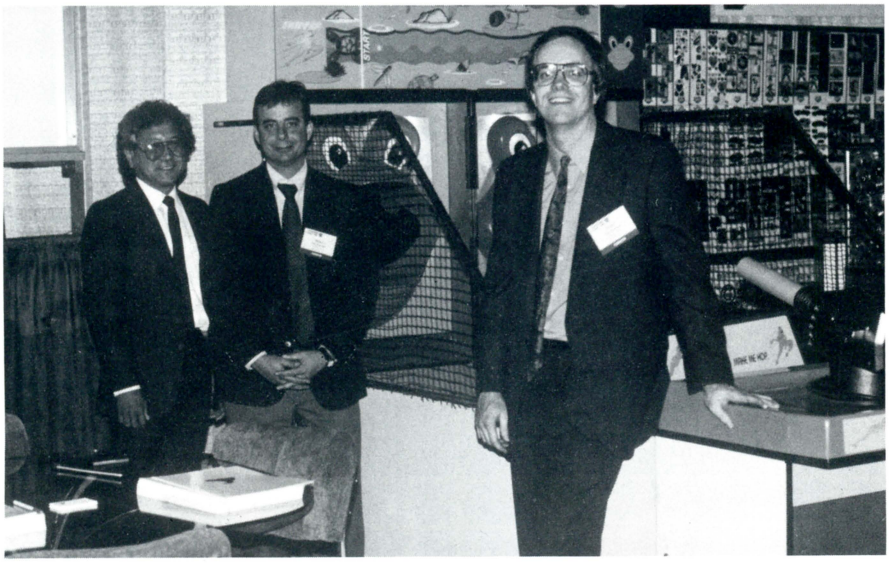

With new *Great Frog Race* are Meltec's Roy Nishi, Mike and Jon McEwan at the ACME show.

mechanical frog atop the backboard advances faster in his race to the finish line. Two players race against each other, or one player can compete against the computer. Dimensions are 91" high by 12' long by 61" wide.

Background sounds set the mood of a frog pond with crickets and bullfrogs. Synthesized voices start the race with "Ladies and gentlemen, start your frogs!" As the race continues, vocals announce who's in the lead, and declare the winner at the end ("It's Hopper by a tongue!").

All those orders for *The Great Frog Race* are a tribute to the game's appeal. "It's so simple that we didn't even have to tell people how to play," commented Meltec engineering chief Roy Nishi. "Everybody immediately understands the concept. Moms and dads play against their kids; kids play each other; you name it. They have lots of fun and it's fun for us to watch that kind of immediate, positive player reaction."

The game features a colorful, molded fiberglass frog target for each player station, plus digital sound and voice. A Deltronics ticket dispenser is standard for each player station. Easy access and high reliability are sure to please operators, as are the operator-adjustable features (length of race, coinage, and ticket dispensing levels).

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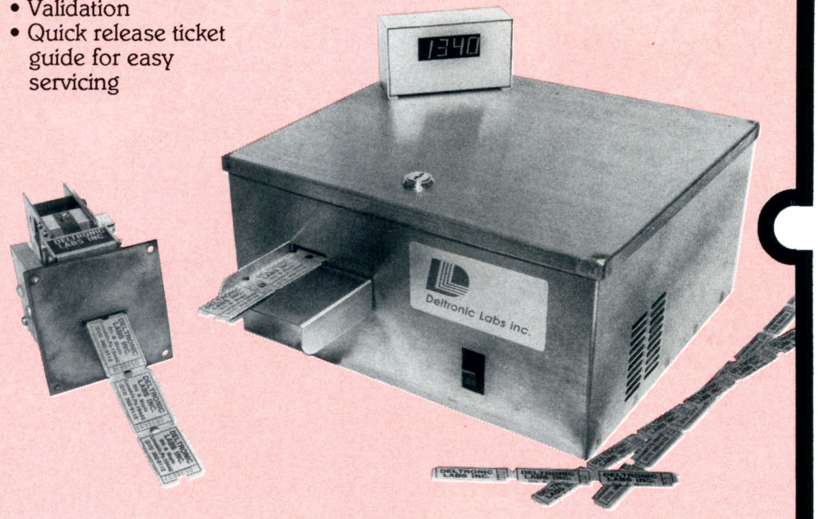

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INTERVIEW

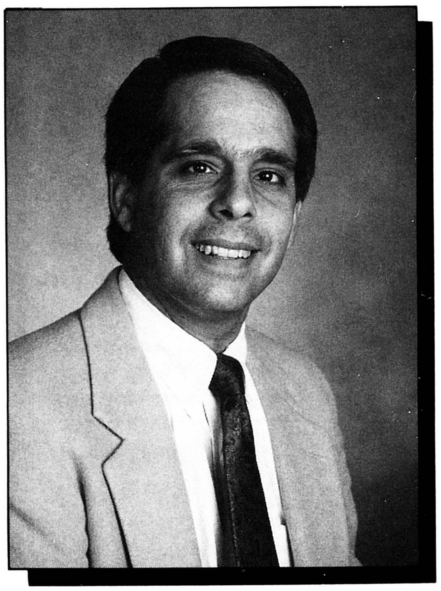
DAVID CAPILOUTO

knowledgeable distributor speaks out on the profitable redemption market

We often ask redemption manufacturers, "Which distributors are really knowledgeable about your kind of equipment?" Out of the whole country, the first "redemption distributor expert" named by many factories is David Capilouto, VP of Sales for Greater Southern Distributing Co. (Atlanta, Ga.). For several years, David has made redemption one of his major specialties.

You've heard of Southern charm? This smiling, soft-spoken fellow is always easy to talk to. Maybe he gives that relaxed, comfortable impression because he literally grew up in the coin machine business. "When I was a kid we used to have a one-stop in Montgomery, Ala.," David recalled. "I worked there during holidays and summers, along with working on a music and pool route. I filled in on a vending route some, too. I left coin-op to go to school, then after graduation I practiced accounting for 18 months. In 1974 I decided to get back in the business. I came to Atlanta to work with Morris Piha to expand our distribution here. Working in all phases of the business, we tried to capture more of the market. Today we like to think we're one of the top distributors in our region."

Along with David's Southern charm and his lifetime of coin-op experience, comes one of those "Southern Gothic" family trees where the branches seem to criss-cross all over the place. David's grandfather, David R. Franco, founded Franco Distributing in 1928 (making David a third-generation member of the industry). Some time later, David's father Joe Capilouto partnered with Rubin Franco and Morris Piha to purchase Franco Distributing and



"in 1964 they expanded into distribution in Atlanta when they purchased Greater Southern. These three fellows are now partners in the two dealerships and in a route," David explained.

Today, Rubin Franco handles distribution in Montgomery and David's father Joe handles routes. Greater Southern prexy Rubin Piha (Morris' son) handles vending sales & administration in Atlanta, while David handles Greater Southern's game sales.

REPLAY: David, when did Greater Southern decide to get serious about redemption?

DAVID: We've been selling it strongly for four or five years and sales have been very solid. Two years ago, redemption sales were greater than our sales of pinball, pool tables or music. Currently redemption is somewhat less than those categories, but it remains very important to us. It's another part of the product line which we recognize as a vital part of the distribution profit center.

REPLAY: For a long time, redemption factories have been pushing to have their games considered a "staple" on an equal plane with jukeboxes, pinball, pool and video. At this point, have they succeeded?

DAVID: We obviously regard redemption as a staple in our marketplace. I guess the one ingredient to classify something as a staple is longevity. Redemption definitely has longevity in terms of earning potential and equipment value. I'd place it alongside pool tables, pinball machines and jukeboxes. Another way to validate that redemption is a staple, is that some of the finance companies we do business with are quicker to finance this type of equipment than video, because it retains its value and has the kind of resale value you would hope for.

REPLAY: Many factors have been cited to account for the success of redemption — such as ROI, player demographics, merchandise appeal, etc. Are we overlooking some "magic ingredient"? If so, what is it?

DAVID: When you talk about a magic ingredient, I think of video equipment like *Street Fighter II* and *Champion Edition*. We ask ourselves, what is the ingredient that makes those particu-

lar titles stand out, when to us it looks comparable to other fighting games? And we can't figure out what it is. Redemption, on the other hand, is very straightforward in my view. There is no magic . . . and in our eyes, that's what makes it nice. People of all ages, male and female, like a chance to win something. That's the driving force behind the success of redemption.

REPLAY: Redemption first began as an almost exclusively arcade-based phenomenon. Yet a recent poll of street operators showed this sector rates redemption equipment as their highest-earning category. Street operators said their "average" redemption game earns more per week than their "average" video, pin or jukebox. How important is redemption to today's street operator?

DAVID: I think the significance is relative to the number of locations one can secure. Street locations are limited, as far as we see, for redemption. You're limited to bowling centers, some miniature golf courses and truck stops. Maybe a few others. In these sorts of sites, we've had some success encouraging operators to broaden their equipment offering with redemption. If the operator doesn't use redemption in these types of locations, he's missing the boat on a chance to increase his earnings. But in classic street stops like bars, taverns, or movie theaters, the opportunity is just not there for most types of redemption equipment.

'There is no magic. . . and in our eyes, that's what makes it nice. People of all ages, male and female, like a chance to win something. That's the driving force behind the success of redemption.'

REPLAY: How much of the market does the street operator account for? Of every 100 redemption games sold, do 30 end up in street stops?

DAVID: In our market I'd say less than 30%, probably closer to 15 or 20% of total redemption equipment, is sold to street operators. There's a little skepticism due to the size of investment required. Generally speaking, we are able to encourage and convince the operator to try redemption in the proper types of locations, usually by pointing to a similar location which has already succeeded. You work on what you've tried, do it with one customer and then the next customer has a track record to go on.

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REPLAY: For example?

DAVID: Recently a bowling center with a pool room and video gameroom didn't like the type of clientele drawn by the pool room, even though income was positive. We talked to them about redemption and showed them various sites around Atlanta. They decided to try it. The operator was very reluctant to make that investment at first, but now both parties are very happy. They've increased their gross earnings two and three times. With video, you're dealing with 13- to 19-year-old clients. Redemption brings in parents who have money. It broadens the base.

REPLAY: What types of redemption equipment do street operators use? Is it any different from what's in arcades?

DAVID: Some street spots are more inclined to use adult pieces like card-themed games, coin pushers and other faster-playing equipment with greater win potential.

> ***'. . . one of our selling factors was it was something different that people couldn't play at home. The burnout for players is too great if you only offer one type of game. Redemption is a stabilizer when other types of equipment are not predictable in earning power.'***

REPLAY: Is it your impression that some regions of the country (East Coast, the South) have taken to redemption with more enthusiasm than others? If so, why would this be so?

DAVID: I often hear that redemption is regional. Specifically, when talking to suppliers and distributors, the redemption concept doesn't seem to be as exciting on the West Coast. I can't understand why it might not play equally well there, since it works well in the South, the East Coast and the Midwest. After all, industry members in the Western region probably have more bowling centers and miniature golf courses than we do, and they sure don't face a big weather problem.

REPLAY: So why the difference?

DAVID: My feeling is there's probably more excitement and more money made with video on the West Coast, and people have a tendency to go with the flow. What looks like an exciting opportunity to some, may look like a lot of work and less attractive to somebody else. But I think in time, redemption will become successful everywhere. To make it work, you first have to look at it as a staple. And for that to happen, it may require some softening of the video market, in regions where video has been stronger than elsewhere.

REPLAY: How important is redemption to arcades these days? We hear a lot about it, but how much is hype?

DAVID: In our market, your typical arcade would not exist without redemption. The earning potential is crucial. When we first looked at redemption, one of our selling factors was it was something different that people couldn't play at home. The burnout for players is too great if you only offer one type of game. Redemption is a stabilizer when other types of equipment are not predictable in earning power. Around here, we have many storefront arcades that have been able to expand their markets with redemption. They can have church groups, birthday parties, you name it. All these groups feed off each other and they don't dry up. Redemption

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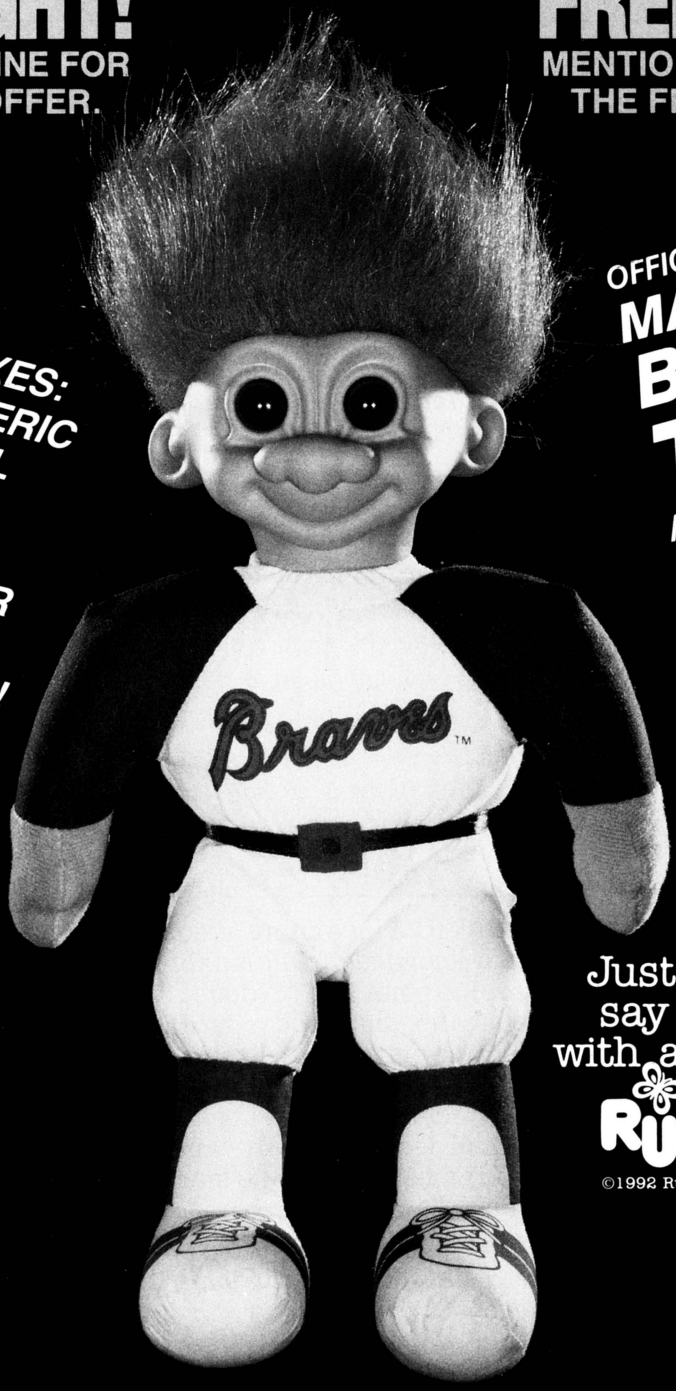

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equipment isn't cheap, but when people come to us saying they want to open an arcade, we strongly encourage them to recognize they need redemption, as well as video, to survive.

REPLAY: How much is the sales success of particular redemption games based on weekly earnings? Considering that a good redemption piece can last for years in one location, is weekly earnings the "wrong" criteria on which to measure a game's success and make purchase choices?

DAVID: In my view, weekly earnings will always be a primary factor in selling equipment, period. Operators will always have word of mouth about the hot pieces that earn lots of dollars per week. That's as true of redemption as it is of any other equipment. Even with a classic redemption piece that has strong return on investment, weekly earnings is still the first thing you sell. With one unit, you can make $100 steady; with four units banked together, it's $400 a week . . . operators pay close attention to that. Now, you have to be careful how you "sell" weekly earnings. Many people don't factor in payout; they don't consider the net. When we test and sell redemption equipment, we make sure we understand what the payout factor is. You have to reduce weekly earnings by the cost of goods sold. It's the net that counts!

REPLAY: The better redemption operators seem to speak their own language. They understand the art of percentaging, merchandising, win frequency, etc. Are some good games failing in the market because too many operators (and/or distributors) lack this knowledge?

> ***'Fine-tuning of equipment knowledge will maximize earning potential. No doubt this separates the good operators from the not-so-good. Sure, some operators are more effective than others, but I don't believe a lack of expertise will cause a good game to fail in the marketplace.'***

DAVID: Fine-tuning of equipment knowledge will maximize earning potential. No doubt this separates the good operators from the not-so-good. Sure, some operators are more effective than others, but I don't believe a lack of expertise will cause a good game to fail in the marketplace.

REPLAY: Is there such a thing as a "no-brainer," a surefire success in redemption . . . some game which, like* Pac-Man, *the operator can plug in and ignore (except for collecting the cash box)? How many operators are looking for such a redemption game?

DAVID: Yes, there are a few no-brainers in redemption. Certain equipment that we see on a regular basis — *Wacky Gator, Skee Ball,* the basketballs — are like a video game. You take them out of the crate, set them up, plug them in and they go. They've been tested and percentaged by the factory.

REPLAY: Is there a reason you mentioned* Wacky Gator *in particular, or is any animal-whacker about like any other?

DAVID: No, that particular game is a solid-state unit that works exceptionally well for the abuse that it takes. Two-year-olds play it and 28-year-olds play it. The design, sound effects and graphics have been thought out very carefully to support an appealing overall concept.

REPLAY: That leads to another question. How can operators distinguish the best games, when they're confronted with 14 models of pushers or basketballs? Is must be a bewildering situation.

DAVID: It is, and it can be bewildering for distributors, too. But we've had experience with manufacturers and a certain few are more prominent in the market. There's not just one good basketball to operate; I'd say there are two which are the most reputable. Usually you have one or two "best options" when you look at cranes and coin pushers, too. Faced with a large selection of seemingly near-identical equipment, operators need to depend on an experienced and knowledgeable distributor to help them make those choices.

REPLAY: Skip Doyle (founder and president of Doyle & Associates) predicted years ago that arcades would begin to merge with the operating philosophy of amusement parks,

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growing larger and offering bigger attractions. Do you see this happening?

DAVID: It's definitely a trend. You can see it across the country: Edison Brothers, Pocket Change, Craig Singer's arcades . . . I guess bigger is better for them, although in this region our market doesn't have the demographics to support something of that magnitude. We see a more conservative expansion going on: a miniature golf course adds batting cages; a bowling center adds a video arcade; or a go-kart track may add a combination of miniature golf and arcade games. People want to broaden their entertainment facilities, but here in the South you've got less population growth and so the opportunities to support these massive entertainment amusement parks are limited. We've got one in the area, a water slide which also has a year-round amusement park. So I think the trend of expansion is nationwide, although upgrading all the way to amusement park levels is more regional.

'People want to broaden their entertainment facilities, but here in the South you've got less population growth and so the opportunities to support these massive entertainment amusement parks are limited.'

REPLAY: How much of Greater Southern's showroom floor is devoted to redemption?

DAVID: (Laughs) Not enough! Obviously we're restricted by the size of redemption equipment, but we do try to have about 15% to 20% of our showroom space devoted to redemption. When people walk in, we want them to understand we're in another type of business in addition to video, pins, music and so on. We're also very brochure-oriented. But our philosophy is, if somebody's interested in an arcade, we take them by the hand, put them in a car and drive them to a site where they can see and understand the whole concept in action: the redemption equipment itself, a display counter, the neon, and the complete setup. We could never display all that on our showroom floor; we physically just couldn't do it. But we are prepared to show people the real thing and we do it all the time. This approach is very effective.

REPLAY: Is there any type of support that you wish redemption manufacturers would provide more of? Would you like more product information and training; faster and better parts and repairs; more operator seminars?

DAVID: Redemption manufacturers are pure professionals. They're always willing to educate our sales staff or a single customer. At the tip of a hat, they'll get on a plane and come give seminars. If I had any request to make of redemption factories, it would be that I'd like them to look at equipment cost, if at all possible. It's quite true that a redemption game can stay on location a long time, and that is one of our big selling points. But it also is the case that lower-earning games have to be priced accordingly.

REPLAY: Any chance prices will come down as the redemption becomes more competitive?

DAVID: Actually, some redemption factories recently addressed that at ACME. We saw some attractive equipment that was competitively priced.

REPLAY: Is there anything that redemption factories are especially good at, that you wish other types of manufacturers would emulate?

DAVID: I think the quality of equipment is something others could emulate. Redemption factories build equipment of very high quality. There seem to be less service problems with the "blue chip" equipment, aside from the normal concerns with coin mechs and ticket dispensers.

'Redemption manufacturers are true professionals. They're always willing to educate our staff or a single customer. At the tip of a hat, they'll get on a plane and come give seminars.'

REPLAY: Do you have to "push" redemption to operators, or has it become a demand commodity? Do many operators ask for guidance in this area (which games to buy, or how to make the game profitable)?

DAVID: Operators want good-earning redemption equipment and we have to make them aware of what's on the market. If we're doing our job, customers are inclined to ask what to buy and how to make it profitable. We advise strictly based on earnings report, not subjective impressions.

REPLAY: Do early earnings

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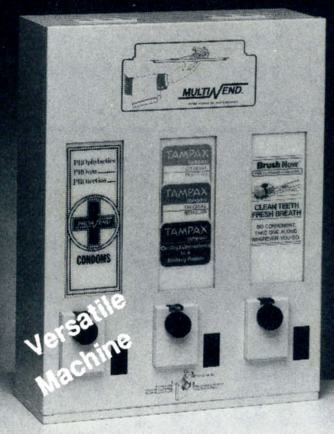

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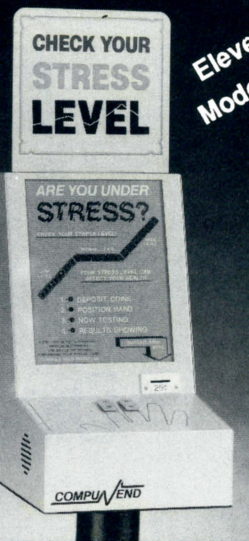

Eleven Models

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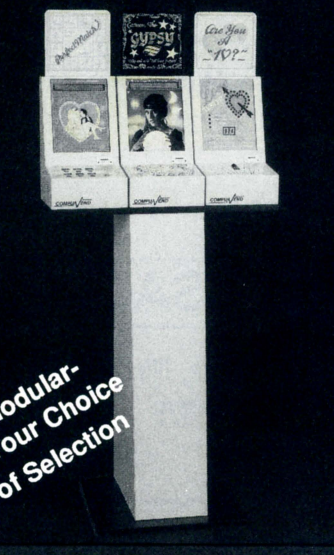

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reports tend to give a rosier view of a game, or do redemption earnings almost always hold up over the long haul?

DAVID: One thing we like about redemption is that a good-earning game today will be a good-earning game tomorrow. We don't have to have a million-unit production run to see how strong a game really is. For example, we were first concerned about the price when we saw *Wacky Gator* because we could not see how it would earn back the investment. But we ordered in small numbers, saw how they performed, and kept re-ordering in small quantities . . . but very, very steadily. By now it's built up to a considerable sales volume and everybody's very happy with it.

REPLAY: How important is the dealer salesman's knowledge of redemption, in sustaining this market? Do most sales come from arcade experts who already know exactly what they want?

DAVID: Knowing is believing. You must believe in order to sell. Less than 10% of our redemption sales come from arcades who know exactly what they want. A great deal of salesmanship goes into this; that's the beauty of it. If we're doing our homework, I think redemption is all salesmanship.

REPLAY: Some redemption manufacturers feel many distributors don't want to sell redemption because there's "not enough turnover."

DAVID: We've experienced somewhat of a slowdown of redemption sales the last couple of years, but I think that's due to the fact that we're in a replacement market. You have to create that replacement market: look at new pieces, make people aware of new ideas and new products. If you do this, you will create turnover and demand. There's enough redemption in our market now that after two or three years, operators want to expand their products. Yes, redemption is stable and the same piece can stay on location for a long time. But by way of comparison, look at jukeboxes. In some locations they have to be swapped out every year or the location will buy their own. Yes, redemption doesn't move as quickly as the top video or pin, but it's a nice piece of business.

REPLAY: What's more important for the success of a redemption center: good games or good merchandise?

DAVID: It's a combination. You need good games first, and good merchandise to enhance the desire to play and create longevity. It's a domino effect; good games, dressed up with good merchandise, keeps 'em coming through the door.

REPLAY: Any final thoughts you'd like to share about redemption?

DAVID: To sum it up, I'd say redemption is thinking. You have to put an extreme amount of thought into all aspects of operation. One must be well organized in record keeping. It's an ongoing process: you get games in; players become familiar with them; their playing ability becomes more proficient; and payout percentages must be adjusted. Merchandise purchases must be well thought out. Redemption is very labor intensive, but you just can't overlook the advantages of creating a more desirable atmosphere for your customers. If you do it right, people come in time and again because they enjoy playing and, just as much, they enjoy the idea of winning something.

REPLAY: Thanks for your time and your thoughts.

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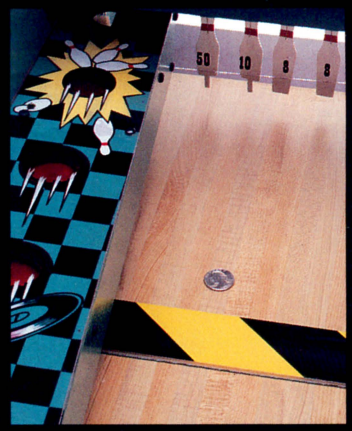

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game center strawpoll

redemption is the "big ticket" today, according to arcade ops on new survey

The video game . . . in all its permutations . . . remains a most generous contributor to the "national game center fund" (the arcade cash box). But in this new *RePlay* strawpoll, "king video" has been squeeked out by the redemption machine as the highest earning class of game on the game center's financial chart.

The strawpoll surveyed 45 game center operators (owners or managers) from around the nation, concentrating on single locations all the way from the boardwalk to the street store to the pocket park and to the mall. And even with the malls and other chain operations, we expressly asked the respondents to supply data **only** for their own store rather than for the whole string of sites.

The picture out there is quite rosy. Fully 60% of the operators say this spring has been better in the cash box than last, and 70% predict that 1992 will be an overall improvement from last year. Why? There's better-earning equipment on the market (and in the arcade), the recession is receeding in many locales and ticket redemption machinery is being added more and more.

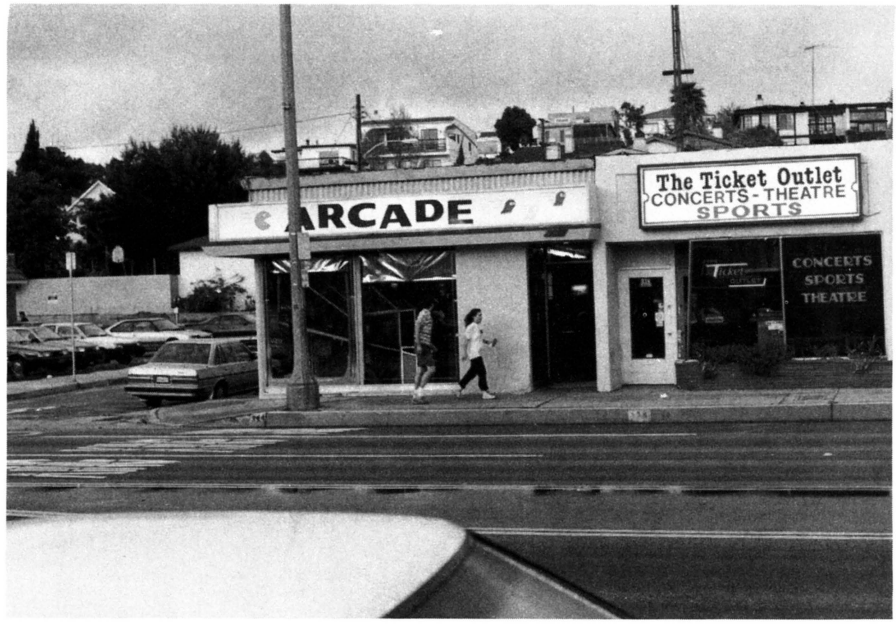
Just about 75% of these surveyed operators run redemption equipment in their stores and report that this single class of machine accounts for fully 42% of their overall coin-op income, just a smidge higher than from video simulators, uprights and conversions. In addition, 66% of them say redemption collections have gone up, meaning that the players are developing a love affair here.

This hardly means that video, pinball and other arcade items like cranes and air hockey aren't pulling their weight. They are, and very nicely in cases. This is all explored inside in the poll proper, including the happy fact that half of the operators say they have most of the top ten chart games available for players at all times.

Between this and the redemption movement, it's clear the players (and of all ages in this family fun center time) are enjoying themselves. (The survey shows that 38% of arcade play from our polled group comes from adults 20 years of age and older these days.)

Speaking of "enjoyment," while the number one "benefit" of running an arcade was cited by the respondents as "the money you make," the second benefit is fascinating: "enjoying watching people having fun in a clean, safe, exciting environment." So, if you can make money and have fun doing it, what more can you ask?

We thank these 45 kind folks for supplying data for this poll and hope you all find something among the statistics and opinions that will be of help to you as we charge from the spring into the summer.



Dale Moore's street arcade on Pacific Coast Highway in Hermosa Beach, California. Our straw poll shows that videos will top the "biggest buys" list this season, followed by redemption and pinballs.

The actual number of game rooms operated by our respondents is slightly on the rise compared to last year. Many operators in this survey are single site owners, which keeps the game room headcount pretty flat all by itself. Here are the responses from the whole crowd to the query, "How many game rooms do you run now compared to last year?"

73% have the **same** number.

18% operate **more.**

9% run **fewer** (probably mall people).

Almost one in every four arcade operating companies here also runs equipment on the street, and more are considering it. Survey sez:

67% only run game rooms.

24% also have street operations.

9% don't presently operate in street stops but are considering it.



Redemption machines now top arcade/family amusement center operators' lists as the highest earning machine. (This great-looking redemption counter is from Namco Operation's West Valley City, Utah arcade.)

Business so far this season is shaping up nicely compared to the spring of 1991. According to this survey:

60% of the operators say it's looking **better.**

26% feel it's running about the **same.**

14%, however, find business to be **worse.**

But what about the whole year of 1992? Just how do they think the full 12 months will treat the cash box?

70% say it should be **better** than 1991.

26% think it will end up about the **same.**

4% (only) feel it will be **worse.**

Why such a bullish attitude toward the business year, apart from the healthy start? We asked the operators to tick off some reasons and here they are in order of frequency of mention:

1. there's better-earning equipment in the field today *(Street Fighter II, Champion Edition,* was indicated as an example by several).
2. economic recovery (although not every area has enjoyed a lowering of the recession, many have).
3. redemption equipment has either been added for the first time or been increased.

Some additional reasons for a promising 1992 mentioned on the questionnaire included: new ownership taking over; an increase in the advertising budget; better management on board; more live attractions added; more variety in the equipment on sale and (as an Alaskan operator put it) "no war in Iraq."

Best Earning Months

We inquired about the best months the three sectors of the arcade business look to each year. Here's how they run for our respondents:

SINGLE SITES:

1. August
2. July
3. December

(Youngsters being out of school for the summer and for the year end holidays are clearly the reason why the business takes a spike here.)

Dear Century,

I need to know what will earn in redemption for my export customers, that is why I rely on Century Vending's advice, **honest answers** and **fair prices.**

Mr. Francisco C. Wong
President
Midway Trading Corp.
San Francisco, Calif.

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Craig S. Moorhead
Vice President Boardwalk Operations
Santa Cruz Beach, Calif.

Greetings:

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Dear Century,

My redemption games business has **steadily improved under your guidance.** Your knowledge of the industry, redemption games their earnings and performance have been invaluable.

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Director of Purchasing
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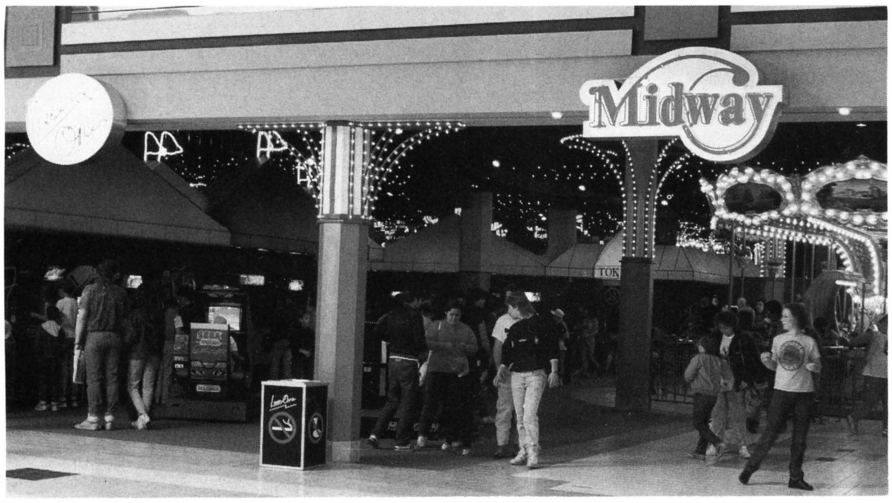


Laser One, a family amusement center located in the River City Mall (Ohio), is over 8,000-sq.-ft. and is found in the mall's entertainment and food complex called "the Midway." (Managing partner is Jerry Kroos.)

MALL/SHOPPING CENTERS
1. December
2. November
3. August

(Holiday shopping bears on the first two months, back-to-school buying must bear on the latter.)

POCKETS PARKS
1. June
2. July
3. August

(We would have figured June to end up number three for the family vacation centers, but this is what the survey shows.)

OTHER INCOME

Game center operators often make money from sources apart from the coin machines (food service, merchandise sales, etc.), but we wondered how much . . . how important non-machine revenues really are. Here's how the divvy breaks down for the three sectors:

SINGLE SITES:

89% of revenues come from machines.

11% from all other sources.

(Such were mostly vending, a snack bar, an occasional live attractioin like a shooting gallery and from the sale of t-shirts, pool table supplies and other merchandise.)

MALLS

97½% of revenues come from machines.

(The little bit extra comes from snacks, drinks & party favors.)



A clean, well set-up & nicely-styled Kansas bowling center gameroom operated by Randy Chilton. Operators listing the benefits of running arcades cited "making money" as the number one reason, but right in there at number two was "enjoying watching people having fun in a clean, safe, exciting environment."

POCKET PARKS

42% stem from the machines.

58% come from other sources.

(In this case, those "others" included lots more than food service stations, such as: mini-golf, batting cages, go karts and other rides & attractions which can go into today's family fun center.)

By the way, we asked every polled operator for the number of employees he or she has working at each respective game room, and the averaged-out figure came to five. Now, don't go adjusting your roster radically, because the number of employees yo-yo'd from two all the way up to ten. This is just an average (we didn't count in huge numbers like 25 because the respondent must have misunderstood the question looking just for the help in the game room, not out at the water slide as well).

The Machines

This was a choice crowd we polled this time. When queried about their game room "attraction levels," here are the responses we got (and the picture must look good to the players):

50% say they try to have **most** of the top ten games at all times.

48% have **some** top tens, but most pieces are older than that.

2% (only) admit to being rather **dated** when it comes to newer games.

Game room owners buy equipment from a variety of sources, including from other operators themselves. We asked them all to break it down and the results came out as follows:

74% of the equipment is purchased from local distributors.

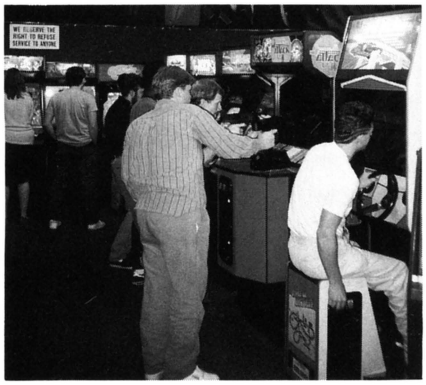
13% is bought from out-of-territory distributors.

7% comes from other operators.

6% is bought directly from manufacturers.

(By the way, 36% of the responding operators buy their entire stock of equipment from local distributors, nothing from anyone else.)

What's the machine "buying enthusiasm" like in the game room sector of the industry these days? Compared to last spring's purchases of new & used goods, here's the pic-



ture for this season:

43% are buying **more.**

50% are taking on about the **same** amount.

7% say they're buying **less.**

Now, which types of machines are their biggest "buys" this season? Here's how the surveyed operators ticked them off in frequency of mention:

1. video games
2. redemption units
3. pinballs

(These three led the rest of the classes of equipment by a good distance.)

Performance

So, what's making money today compared to yesterday? Based on collections, here's how the quarters (or tokens) stack:

VIDEO GAMES

58% say they're **up.**

24% find they're earning the **same.**

18% find video **down.**

PINBALL

62% say it's **up.**

21% find it doing the **same.**

17% say pins are **down.**

POOL

31% say it's **up.**

38% find it the **same.**

31% say pool is **down.**

(Only 25% of the responding operators have pool tables on the floor.)

REDEMPTION

66% say it's **up.**

22% find it the **same.**

12% say it's **down.**

(75% of our surveyed operators have ticket redemption machines.)

CRANES/ROTARIES

39% say they're **up.**

43% find it the **same.**

18% say it's **down.**

AIR HOCKEY

36% say it's **up.**

44% find it the **same.**

20% say it's **down.**

(56% of these operators have air hockey tables at their centers.)

SPORTS GAMES

14% say they're **up.**

72% find them the **same.**

14% say they're **down.**

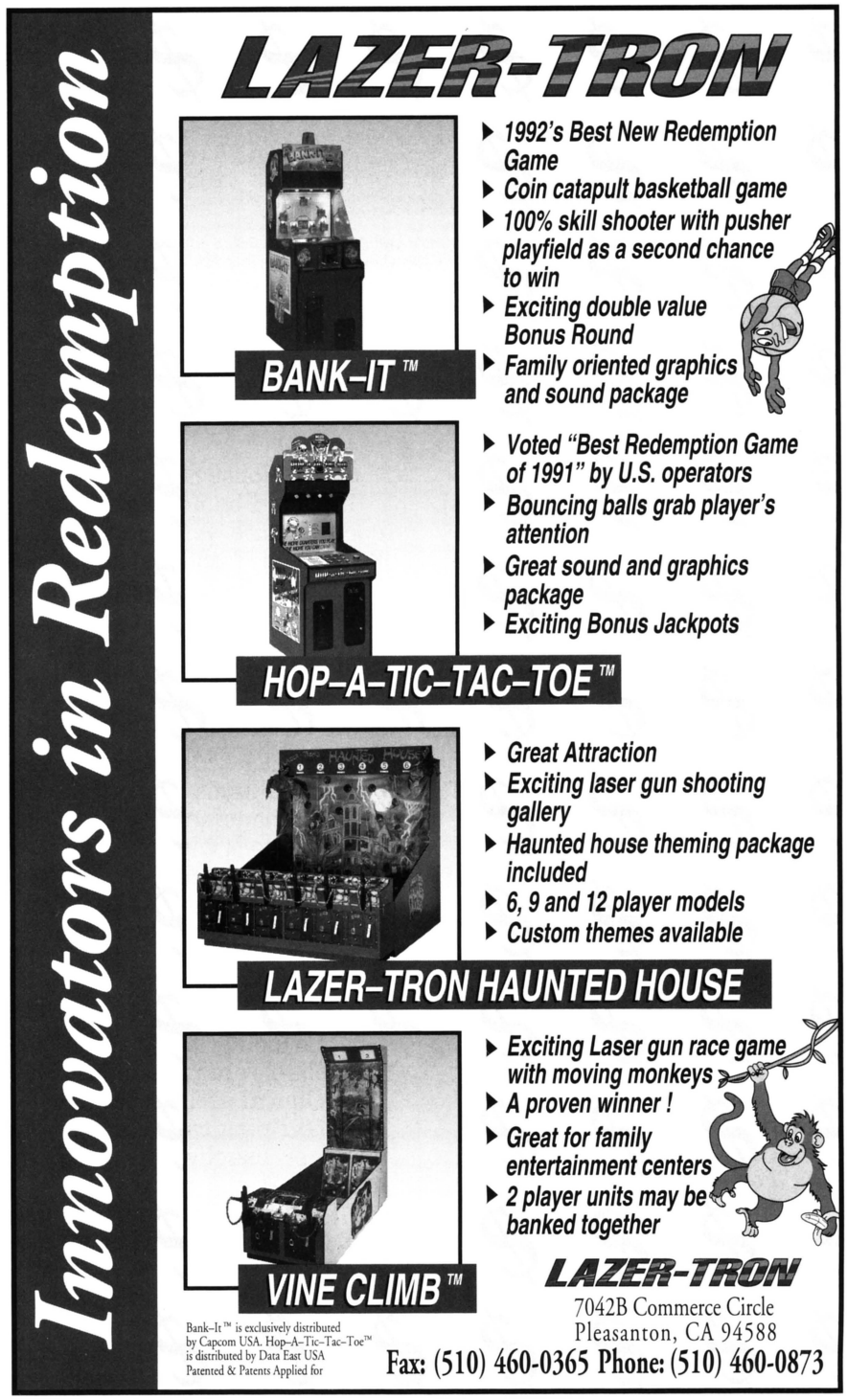
(47% of the operators have sports games in their game centers.)

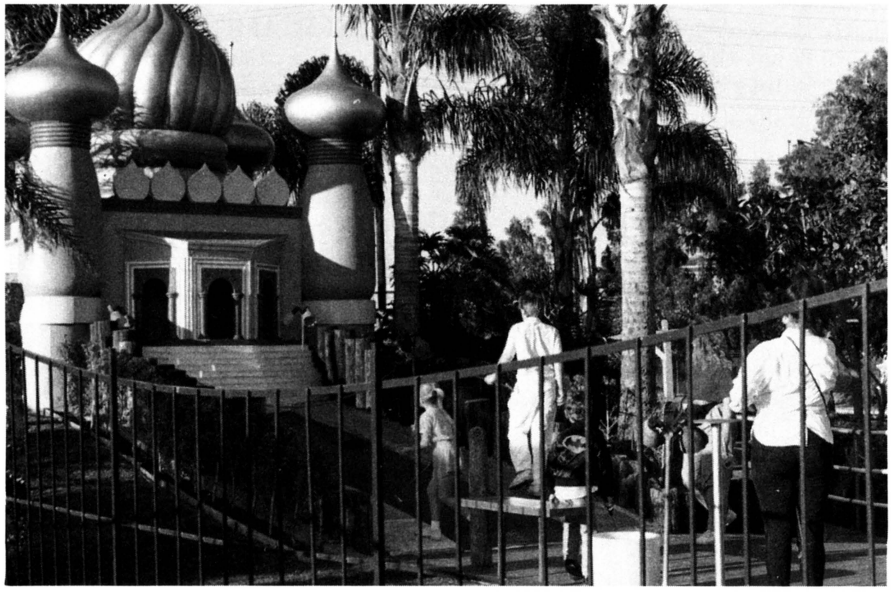
KIDDIE RIDES

18% say they're **up.**

75% find them the **same.**

7% say they're **down.**





A Malibu Castle golf and games location in Southern California. Pocket parks including golf, water slides, race cars, etc. do best from June to August. Malls and shopping centers fare best during holiday and back-to-school times (December, November & August). Top months for single sites are August, July & September.

Which classes of machines make the most money of all? We asked the game center operators exactly that question and here's their tabulated list by order of frequency:

1. REDEMPTION GAMES
2. VIDEOS (including sitdowns)
3. PINBALL MACHINES
4. CRANES/ROTARIES
5. POOL TABLES

(Redemption just squeaked video out for the top spot on this "chart"; and according to another question on our survey, over 40% of the averaged-out income for those who run redemption machines comes from — redemption! That's two out of every five quarters or tokens. That's action!)

Top Earners

We asked the operators for their two top-earning games in each of the three principle categories, and here's how they ranked out.

REDEMPTION

1. *Skeeball*
2. *Rock 'n Bowl*
3. *Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe*
   Pop-A-Ball (tie)
5. *Knock Down*

VIDEO GAMES

1. *Street Fighter II (CE)*
2. *X-Men*
3. *Street Fighter II*
4. *Terminator 2*
5. *Steel Talons*

PINBALL MACHINES

1. *Addams Family*
2. *Terminator 2*
3. *Getaway*
4. *Hook*
5. *Fun House*

It should be noted that the poll questionnaire went into the mailbox Friday, May 1 and that these specific results were not factored into the *Players' Choice* chart up front... should be fun to compare anyway, no?)

Favorite Factories

We next asked the arcade people to list the name of their favorite machine manufacturer (any class of product) along with one reason why they chose the company. Here are the results, ranked according to number of mentions (plus a number of reasons why):

1. WILLIAMS

"They make good, quality products and their prices are okay." (NH)

"Reliable products and very helpful technical assistance." (AZ)

"Their pins rarely break down and they usually only make winners." (NJ)

"They provide good technical help over the phone when you have a problem." (MD)

"They take consistant care of operators." (AK)

"They make good games and the folks there are friendly. Just wish parts would be available faster." (MN)

2. ATARI

"Their games are very well built and are generally good money makers." (IL)

"I think their graphics and the set-up of their games are much better." (KS)

"I vote for them for their service & parts response." (OH)

"They test their games better and make more corrections to make them more successful for longer earning power." (PA)

"They make great machines at affordable prices and don't compete in our business." (ME)

3. CAPCOM

"*Street Fighter* is the best video as far as player appeal goes." (TX)

"In my opinion, they build the highest-quality games made today." (FL)

"It's Capcom for producing highly profitable machinery." (TX)

4. SEGA

"Their equipment has 'legs' and you get a decent manual." (NE)

"Nearly zero percent down-time on all of their machines we run!" (OR)

"Their games are built like tanks and you get good factory support (CA)

5. SNK

"They put out a good product with that *Neo-Geo* and it's priced to help operators." (TX)

"I like their idea of a kit that takes replaceable game cartridges backed by a good supply of new games." (MN)

For "Honorable Mention," we also have these for you:

Betson: "Good product and product support." (PA)

Lazer-Tron: "Their Matt Kelly is very helpful and professional. Their games are great money-makers."

Namco: "The quality of the presentation is always first class!" (CA)

Skee-Ball: "They manufacture their products very well and when something breaks, they don't try to hold you up on the part cost." (SC)

Taito: "I vote for them for the good luck we've had with *Sonic Blastman* with all the punishment it's taken." (OK)

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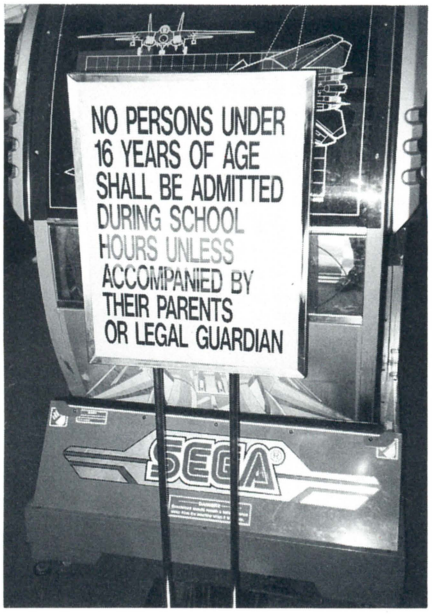


Northridge, Calif.'s Larry Stern (L.A. Amusement Corp.) has this sign in one of his mall locations.

Valley: "Their pool table is the best." (GA)

About Players

Without separating single site operators from mall people and pocket park operators, we asked the whole gang this question: Which age groups give you what percentage of total play? Survey sez:

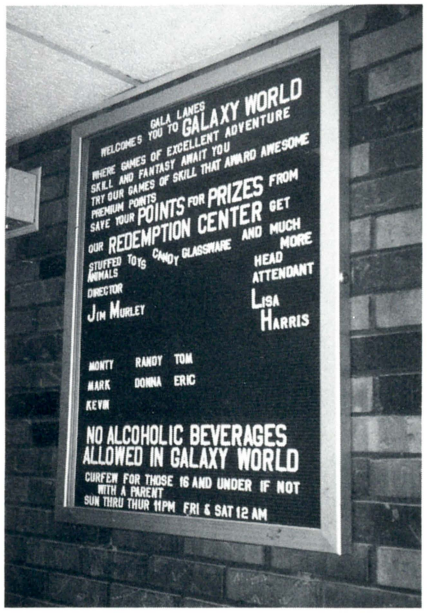
37% comes from teenagers.
25% from pre-teenagers (kids).
23% from folks aged 20 to 29.
15% from the 30 and up crowd.

According to our crowd, the amount of **female play** they figure the machines enjoy comes to... 25%.

We next asked for a brief list of behavorial rules and caught the usual "no booze, no drugs, no spitting, no swearing, etc. etc." The "no loitering" dictate is one of the hottest and one fellow enforces this by requiring customers to buy at least a dollar in tokens to enter the store. In the words of two, the no loitering command was voiced: "no play, no stay" (from GA) and "no money, throw them out" (from FL).

Irritants

Misbehavior in the game center ...be it in the form of loud noise or



A sign laying down the law in Galaxy World, a huge arcade and redemption center in Chicago.

all the way to break-ins and vandalism... is the primary irritant to arcade operators these days when they view their businesses as a whole. Abusive activity can even come down to attitudes, such as one

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guy's primary irritant being "watching a guy in suit and tie playing a game while smoking."

Other irritants listed by operators included "the cost of equipment," amplified by people saying "it's hard to keep up with the new games to please the players." They also get peeved at players who don't take the time to read game instructions.

Some get miffed at parents leaving little children unattended. In the words of one operator, "I don't like being a babysitter!" Keeping the games up and running (especially when a kid gets a breakdown on his favorite piece) is a worry, especially when the nearest repair facility isn't near at all. And, some don't like the quality of equipment turned out by some factories at times.

Other irritants include license fees, bogus tokens that end up in the wrong arcade, players saying they lost a token in a game, the poor public image of a game room in the eyes of some publicans, and the employees who don't like to do the job they've been hired for. That's some of the irritants. Now, what are the "benefits" of owning or running a game center today?

The Benefits

Number one of the list of benefits is the obvious: the money! But believe it or not, a close second "benefit" is best summed up as "enjoying watching people having fun."

Some tradesters love watching kids enjoying themselves, and as one Arizona operator put it: "watching people's faces light up when they walk in." Of course, Wilbur Hildebrand of Putt Putt put both together when he wrote: "They have fun . . . we make money."

Other benefits listed were more "self-full" such as: "I like being my own boss"; "I like being able to play the games for free"; "I have all my problems right there in one place; easy to control"; "it's a twelve-month business"; it's somewhat recession-proof"; and in the words of a lad from Saginaw: "it beats working for General Motors."

A lot of our people simply like the "fun atmosphere" of the place to work in . . . being a part of the entertainment industry, which of course it is. Finally, we'd like to close this with a description given by a Seattle operator on what he believes to be the chief benefit of running a games center: "I like providing a clean, safe, alcohol- and smoke-free environment for people to have fun in."



A montage of photos from a movie promo at Wayne Fromm's Video Invasion (Canada).

What about drugs? Asked to describe the usage within or just outside their game centers . . .

74% said their was **no** usage.

26% described it as **only occasional.**

not one operator called it **"serious."**

How about the need to call the police to break up a disturbance or eject a particularly nasty player?

53% of the operators said they had to call in the cops to solve a problem at least once in the past 12 months. Some are grateful the police are at hand to provide security when all else fails.

Token & Coins

57% of our polled operators use tokens in their game centers these



Over half the operators polled use tokens in their arcades/amusement centers. This shot, with a token machine in center, is from the gorgeous Namco center located in Sandy, Utah.

days. With few exceptions, they vend 4 tokens for a dollar (the exceptions count 3 for a buck and a couple offer 5). For a $5 bill, the number varies quite a bit more, but the two most common are the standard 20 tokens and the promotional 25. Other numbers counted for the $5 ran from 17 and 18 all the way up to 28 and 30.

Even though more than half of our responding operators use tokens in their game centers, we asked the crowd what they thought of the drive for a new dollar coin.

24% are **hot** for it.

52% are **neutral** on the matter.

24% say they **don't need it.**

(In the words of S.C. operator, "green stuff is easy to count.")

Speaking of "green stuff," we asked the operators to tick off some machines they'd like to see the manufacturers install dollar-bill validators onto. Ranked in order of mention, they are:

1. deluxe videos.
2. redemption machines.
3. better video uprights.
4. pinballs.
5. cranes/rotaries.

(Or, as a Washington State operator put it, "on anything that's gonna cost me more than $5,000.")

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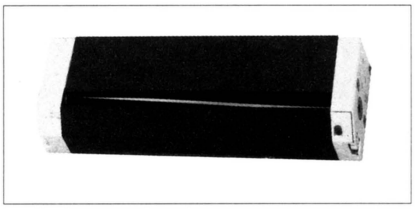

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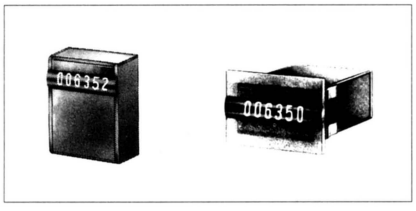

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Associations

Two of every three operators participating in this poll belong to a national trade association.

55% belong to AMOA.

45% belong to IAAPA.

(And a number belong to both.)

But, would they want to see someone or some organization form a new association that's totally dedicated to the interests of game center operators?

58% said **yes.**

31% said **no.**

11% had no answer.

Conclusion

Before we get into our *Likes, Gripes & Swipes* section (where a number of tradesters sound off on this and that), we'd like to close the poll properly with an upbeat message. When asked for their personal attitudes toward the game center business as it stands right now:

76% said they're **glad** to be in it!

14% described themselves as **blasé.**

10% said they'd like to **sell out.**

(If they'd like to sell out because the place is just plain rotten and in a rotten location, sorry; but if their places have any promise, we have an idea that more than a few others would be happy to negotiate.)

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(Jim Stansfield Vending, LaCrosse, WI)
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(Land of Oz, Soquel)
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(Great Lakes Music, Lansing, MI)
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(Misty Automatic, N. Amityville)
Roger Stafford, TN
(Double D Amusement, Memphis)
Mollie Wheeler, OH
(Gem Music & Vending, Dayton)
Lisa Wilczynski, MA
(Becker Amusement, Ludlow)
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LIKES, GRIPES & SWIPES

There are always some compliments, as well as some angst, expressed in the concluding "Likes, Gripes & Swipes" section of RePlay's *operator polls. As you've already seen, business is generally running very well for the game room sector of the industry these days, although some concerns exist, as you will see:*

At this point in time, I see the industry evolving from what it was ten years ago into one offering more true family entertainment. I refer to redemption and sports games as opposed to videos which have become less a part of the overall gross of my locations. Our business has become a total family entertainment concept in contrast to the video arcade catering to mostly 14- to 25-year-old male players.

Birthday parties are an essential ingredient of our overall concept. Military night, honor roll programs, senior citizen discounts, etc. involve the entire family. Our merchandise is geared for ages two all the way up to 80. And everybody can enjoy some form of entertainment because our games are geared for each age group of customers.

Joe Wolf
Family Arcade
Pennsylvania

While the economy continues to flip flop and affects us all, we need stability in the games business. Manufacturers are putting out too many new games but too few "new" ideas. And, the big earners are too expensive for us seasonal operators.

Lake George, New York

The cost of equipment is way too high. *SF II CE* is outrageous at $3,100. I'm buying legal parallel boards. Occasionally, I'll buy a new (and expensive) sitdown piece. The last one was *Hard Drivin'*. I also bought a kit for *Road Riot* that I put into a *Mach I* cabinet.

John Tommasi
Main St. Arcade
Salem, New Hampshire

The competition among manufacturers as well as among operators is more fierce (than ever). It forces everyone to work harder to stay in business. There are fewer hits coming out, but the ones that make it are dynamite.

Other manufacturers should take a look at Williams' technical assistance. It's the best. You talk to people, not to answering machines. You get schematics, not a couple of pages showing DIP switch settings. Shall I continue?

Brahim Sebkhi
Golf 'N Stuff
Arizona

It's a tough, hard, time-consuming business. Even run in an absentee management fashion, I still have to do all the ordering and machine changes as we expand. And there's really not enough bottom-line profit for all the time my partner and I put in it! There are also too many rules and regulations city-wise to comply with for such a marginally-profitable business!

New Jersey

I'm very optimistic about the future of family entertainment centers. It's really quite simple when you look at it: the family entertainment center, having a greater variety of entertaining elements, will attract a wider portion of the general population than the traditional arcade did. Whether it's redemption, expensive simulators, major mechanical rides or whatever the marketplace demands, the mega-arcade can react and change directions in an instant.

The manufacturers I've spoken to think the family entertainment center concept is the future of this business, and some of the products of late seem to bear this out. The traditional 2,000-sq.-ft. arcade is like a single screen theater . . . it's a dinosaur! We're finally beginning to move away from the 'games' business and into the 'entertainment' business, competing more with multiplex theaters and theme parks.

David Schick
The Boardwalk
El Cajon, California

My only criticism with this business is the male-dominated customer base that exists because most of the games have limited appeal to women. Probably 90% of all videos have a fighting or sports theme which appeal mostly to teenage or young adult men.

Redemption pieces have more of an appeal for female players, but these types of games usually make up only about 20% or 25% or our typical game lineup in any given location. Since most of our locations are in major malls, it seems to me we lose a lot of potential customers because there are a higher percentage of female shoppers in most of the malls I've been in.

I think the last video games that had true appeal to women were maybe *Ms. Pac-Man* or possibly *Qbert,* and these were out a very long time ago.

John Shaver
Dream Machine
Maryland

If an arcade operator isn't making money now, he's not paying attention to his business.

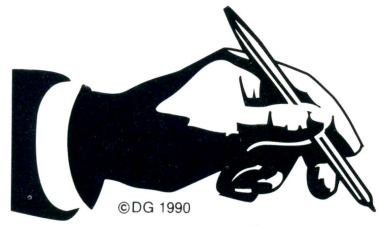
Anchorage, Alaska

There are many positives and negatives in our business today. I've loved the arcade business since I've been a kid. But the high license fees and the dangerously high taxes are up to the brim. And, of course, the loyalties of the past are almost unheard of. Few in our business dare to speak out against the abuses. But, most customers and a handful of distributors are with us do or die.

If we can make it through this depression, I guess we can survive just about anything. Even though the prices of the machines are sky high, I do anticipate them paying for themselves in a season.

I appreciate the manufacturers coming out with great new games. Their research costs must be mind-boggling. Too bad they don't come out with a handbook to help the new operator to survive. I can think of so many mistakes new operators have and will make. One funny one comes to mind: the new operator who complained about a machine that he had to take the key out of the door to empty the cash box, even though the collections were great.

I do welcome competition and always will. But we are in a cut-throat situation today whereby everything goes. I wish I could help new operators out, but today it is everyone for himself. I pray that we come out of this depression this summer and get back to the good old days when bus-



iness and equipment were so good you didn't have to worry about making a profit, about competition or the never-ending stumbling blocks. All you had to do was run your business properly and treat your customer like a customer. Like a guest!

Richard Smith
Wonderland Arcade
Maine

My distributor has had a hold on trade-ins since last November. Does he really think I'm going to continue buying brand new pieces from him when I've got a warehouse full? All they want to take is what you don't want to get rid of.

Norm Christensen
Sandbox Arcade
Kearney, Nebraska

I think the cost of a new kit on today's market is too high. An arcade can't afford to stay updated every year, because after the first season of play, the value goes down 50% to 70% normally. And when you face a lot of competition, it's hard to stay updated like you really need to be.

Also, you need to have ticket redemption machines, but again the cost is so high you often can't afford to buy them. So, I think manufacturers should consider taking recourse with arcade owners in purchasing redemption equipment because the banks aren't interested in any financial help to buy video or arcade machines. They only want personal guarantees due to a lot of bad experiences in the past.

H. Lee Brown
Slots for Fun
N. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Until we get out of the quarter syndrome, I don't expect any real progress. I saw a *Terminator* pin in Kansas City last week set at 25-cent play!

Saginaw, Michigan

You will probably hear from me a lot in the future, but business is so good right now, I don't have time to address anything at the moment.

Jack Siefert
Cap'n Bogey's
Dayton, Ohio

That's a good note to close off on. Our thanks to the fellows and ladies who took the time to file their questionnaires and we hope the results of our straw poll provide some helpful advice to you and yours.



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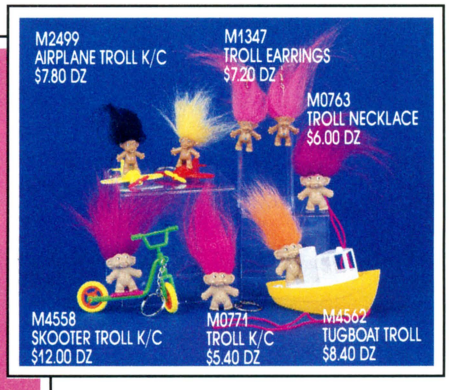



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THE REDEMPTION PROS

Art Warner and the gang at Coin Concepts Inc. don't just sell games; they sell knowledge, quality, service and long-term profitability



The Coin Concepts crew at the ACME show in San Antonio with their *Around The World* redemption game. Standing are Jeff Lankiewicz and Stacey Martin; kneeling are Gary and Art Warner.

Art Warner remembers when redemption wasn't redemption. "During a AMOA seminar in 1984, just about the time that cranes were really becoming popular," Art said, "I recall some of us on the panel told operators that cranes were just the tip of the iceberg. The real long-term profits, we said, were in ticket/token vending and merchandising games."

Ticket/token vending and merchandising games? What a mouthful! "Actually, I've been using the term 'redemption' since 1972 and I'm sure it's been around a lot longer," Art smiled.

One thing is certain: Art Warner has been around a good while, too. He's earned his "redemption stripes" with over 25 years in the business. Now he's in his fourth year as president of his own Coin Concepts, Inc. (CCI).

"Redemption is still an expanding market for us," Art said as he surveyed the company's steady progress. "Sales are strong today and getting stronger — not only domestically, but worldwide."

CCI occupies a 12,000-sq.-ft. facility in East Brunswick, N.J., close to the famed Jersey Shore where redemption came of age. The firm employs 14 hardworking folks. The sales staff includes Art's son Gary Warner, who's quite knowledgeable and articulate about redemption in his own right; Carl De Venio, who has learned the company, the market and sales from the ground up; and Stacey Martin, who's taken on sales duties in addition to her office support chores.

That sales team has plenty of product to work with. CCI boasts a


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broad, varied line of 20 excellent redemption games currently for sale (with several future titles in development for a fall debut). Meanwhile CCI is enjoying the success of its first-ever full-sized basketball game, a unique five-hoop number called *Around the World*. They're also scoring fine sales with a delightful coin shooter called *Luigi's Corner* and a fun kiddie ball-toss game called *Froggy*. In combination with their in-depth offering of pushers, cranes, novelties and skill pieces, CCI's latest products have positioned the company in the forefront of the ongoing redemption revolution.

AROUND THE WORLD

Around the World offers addictive, fast-action gameplay. "Everybody has played this as a kid," Gary Warner said in explaining the game's appeal. "When they see five baskets, they're intrigued immediately and they can relate to the gameplay right away."

Around the World typically uses 7" balls, but operators can use a larger ball. It plays a catchy tune and generates a "swish" sound when the player makes a hoop. Gameplay follows the rules you remember from the basketball court. The first round lights up the target baskets in order and awards two points per basket. Players have an overall time limit in this phase, but there is no "per basket" time limit during this round.

If the player makes enough baskets during the initial round (number required is operator adjustable), then the game goes into an overtime bonus round. At this point, basket indicators light up at random, giving a four-second limit to hit each basket, and awarding three points per basket.



CCI President Art Warner

It's built as well as it plays. Dimensions are 9'9" high by 4' wide by 8'7" deep. Construction boasts an all-metal frame and an exterior of marine-quality plywood. The game is shipped 90% assembled; operator set-up simply requires installing netting on sides and top. The unit has a Deltronics ticket dispenser and a Coin Controls coin mech (bill acceptor optional); it is also compatible with sports card dispensers.

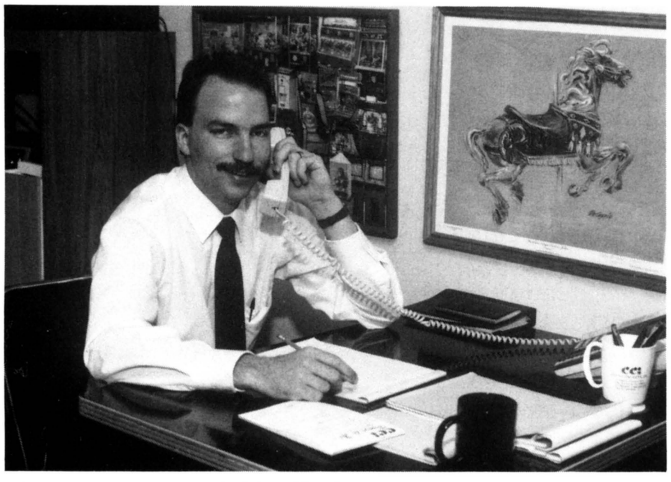
"The game is earning extremely well," Art Warner reported. "Reception at trade shows was quite strong and at this point, we've very far behind in delivery!" Gary Warner added, *"Around the World* is not just a piece for a family fun center. Many operators are using it in sports bars and taverns, too. And it doesn't have to give out tickets, so almost any type of location can use this game."

LUIGI'S CORNER

Art Warner got the idea for *Luigi's Corner* during a trip to Europe, when he was flipping through a book and saw a photo of a monkey and organ grinder. It's a skill game (although some of the trade seems to perceive it as a pusher due to the coin shooter control). Players shoot their coin at any of several targets which are situated in a beautifully rendered street scene.

Anyone who has seen this game in person knows it is a "toymaker's delight." It appeals to every age group: from 8 or 9 years old and up. Kids like the colorful characters and the monkey; parents and grandparents like the nostalgia appeal.

Animated puppet characters include the organ-grinder, whose arms move up and down as he grinds his organ, which itself moves left and right. The monkey's whole body turns from left to right and back again as he offers his cup for coins. Organ music includes five or six different classical tunes arranged in a peppy "merry-go-round style" to set the Old World mood.



Operations Manager Jeff Lankiewicz

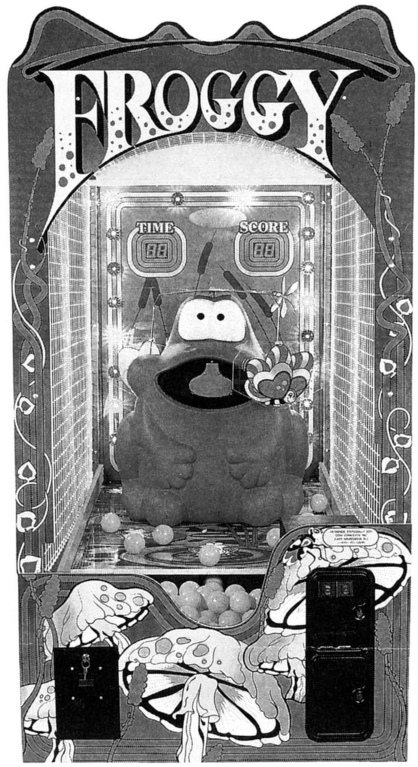


Getting products checked out and packed for shipment are (from front): Lonny Warner, Anthony Frusco, George Santana & Carl DeVenio.

Originally the game was intended as a midway piece for carnivals, with only the monkey's cup and organ-grinder's hat as targets. When operators suggested *Luigi's Corner* could be adapted for arcades, CCI added targets street curbs, two garbage cans, a balcony and the sewer. The move worked: average weekly earnings are quite high by any standard, said the firm, and top locations have it making as much as today's leading deluxe video! The game initially prompted many single orders, and now operators are coming back to reorder, some requesting multiple units.

FROGGY

The kiddie market is heating up and CCI has excellent redemption equipment to appeal to those players. Kids from age 2 to 10 really enjoy *Froggy*. The size is comfortable for them (a large green frog sits at the end of a six-foot cabinet). Also, the cartoon-like character speaks to kids, saying "ribbit, ribbit" and "feed me more!" The simple gameplay is perfect for children, too: object of the game is to toss balls into the frog's mouth, which opens and closes. Players have to time their throws to dodge the revolving butterflies that spin around froggy's head (they're cleverly suspended from a rotating mobile).





Operators can make the challenge easier or more difficult by regulating the speed of the revolving butterflies and by adjusting how long the frog's mouth stays open. The game lends itself to "win every time" play or to awarding free times, too... another kid-appeal factor.

Solid construction includes a sensor that will shut off butterflies and shut off the ball agitator motor in case a child tries climbing up onto the game. A Deltronics ticket dispenser is included.

THE CCI LINE

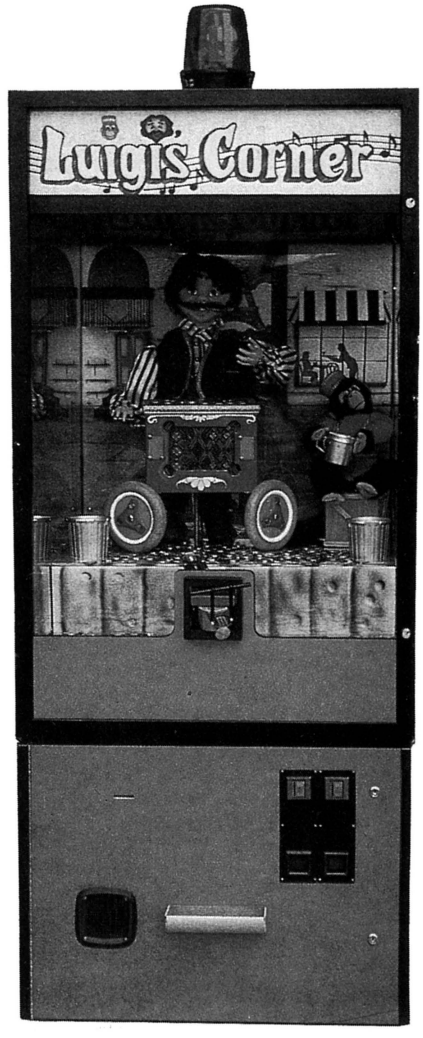
Other CCI products include *Toss 'Em*, a skill toss game; *Junior All American*, a kiddie basketball game; *Fire Fighter*, a sitdown shooting game; *Rebound 2* and a kiddie version of *Tic Tac Toe*.

CCI also imports quite a few top-quality redemption items on an exclusive basis, including coin pushers like *Starburst* (a one-player) and *Flamingo* (four- or six-player). *Jungle Tumble*, another import, is a kiddie ping pong action game with cute animals and sounds. *Pig Race* is a classic group race game, featuring a bevy of competing porkers; while *Body Match* is a comical skill-stop game where heads, torsos and legs of various characters revolve on three spinning reels.

Another import, *Five Card Draw*, is a card-themed game suitable for grownup locations. *Love Meter* and *Power House* are impulse novelties. Rounding out CCI's imports are two more kiddie items, *Jumbo the Elephant* and *The Monkey*.

MEETING THE COMPETITION

The redemption market is getting more competitive, Art and Gary believe. "Five years ago, the big video and pinball factories wished redemption would just ago away," Art smiled. "Now we see more and more manufacturers going into redemption themselves. This trend is the best possible proof that the redemption market is profitable and still growing. It reminds me of the early video days: after you have a few machines making handsome income, the next thing you know everybody's getting into the act. Fortunately, good distributors and operators know that putting ticket dispensers on games doesn't necessarily make



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them real redemption products." Added Gary: "We rely on our distributor network to move a lot of product. It's an integral part of our business."

Besides excellent games, CCI meets the competition head-on with reasonable prices. "We try to price our games where they're reasonable for the operator so we can move product, but also maintain our standards so the games hold up for years," Art stated. "You don't buy a redemption game for one year; the beauty of this market is the games earn and earn and earn for five and ten years."

Gary provided an example of this principle from the company's current line-up. "The retail price of our *Froggy* is higher than a dedicated video," he pointed out. "People might say it's an expensive game, but it's built to last 10 or 15 years. We used quality materials because redemption games have to last that long. Certain competitors offer redemption games at lower prices. But after the purchase, operators may find it doesn't even last four years."

For this reason, CCI urges operators to look at long-term ROI when selecting a redemption piece. "People often ask, is it earning $700 a week? And yes, you can do that with the very best redemption pieces in the right location," Gary said. "However, not every piece is a killer. You have to have those steady bread-and-butter pieces that earn their keep year after year."

SERVICE BEFORE & AFTER THE SALE

Service support is a key element in CCI's "one-stop" appeal. "We are very service-conscious," Art said. "That begins with our commitment to build reliable, quality games. But of course you always get some service calls; that's the nature of the business. The question is, how does the manufacturer respond to that need? At Coin Concepts, every customer who has a problem gets immediate attention. If the same specific machine has the problem four times, at that point it's brought to my personal attention. I want to know about it! Usually someone



from our sales department contacts the operator to see how we can solve the problem to everyone's satisfaction. We may even switch the game for them."

CCI custom-tailors each game before shipping it to customers, setting payout percentage levels, coinage in requirements, adjusting token or ticket payout options, and establishing token value. Every redemption operator is unique, says CCI, so every redemption game must be treated individually.

Part of service is an ongoing educational effort. "Sometimes we get calls saying a game is not earning what the customer feels it should be," Art explained. "We ask, what is your ticket award level? Often, they don't know. When they take a look, they may find it's paying 5 or 10%. If that game is sitting next to another game that's paying 25 or 30%, which would you play? Naturally, the public prefers the game which awards the greatest number of tickets. We have even designed a special 'redemption collection sheet' to help operators and distributors be conscious of this." (Editor's note: this useful CCI redemption collection ticket was printed in Art's column a few months ago.)

Also in the field of general market support, CCI provides seminars and consultation for operators and distributors. Art is a familiar face on the seminar circuit at national trade shows, state operator meetings and at distributors. Individual operations around the country benefit from one-on-one consultations with Gary Warner, who drops in to analyze locations and help maximize revenue on particular sites.

A "REDEMPTION ONE-STOP"

The heart of CCI is game design and manufacturing. The company creates initial game concepts, does prototype development and tweaking. CCI takes each prototype through an elaborate testing process that includes videotaped analysis of player interaction with the new game. Much manufacturing is subcontracted, although final assembly is often done at CCI. Either way, when production units finally ship, they've been honed in every detail.

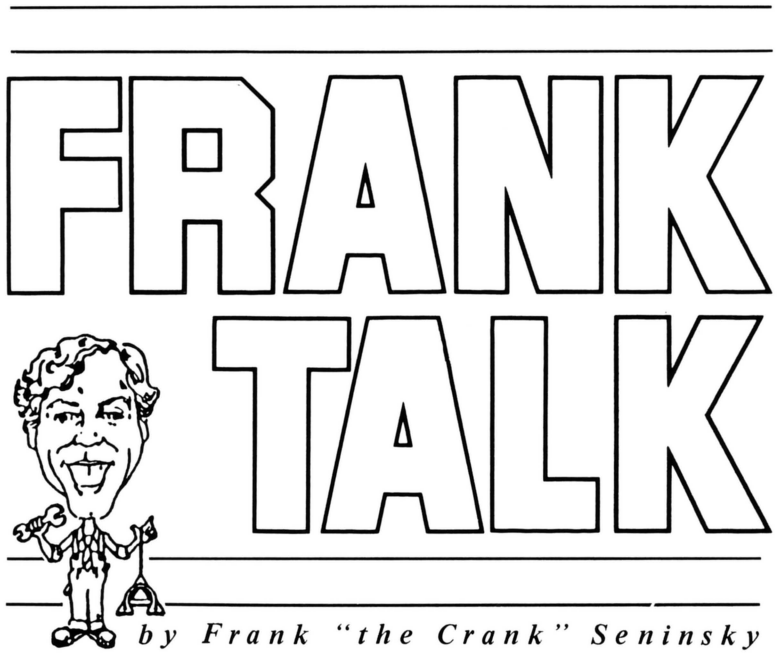
Besides creating and building home-grown games, CCI also imports outstanding redemption games from overseas. These are built to CCI's own demanding specifications, though, to ensure their suitability for the U.S. market. "We don't just buy off-the-shelf units," Art Warner explained. "Our own expertise goes into every game we represent."

Founded in September of 1988, Coin Concepts, Inc. was one of the first factories to call itself a "redemption one-stop." As you can see, the phrase certainly fits. They are truly a full-service organization, doing everything from manufacturing and importing to sales, service and education. As Art Warner likes to say, "We do it all, short of collecting the cash box! With redemption, you're only limited by your imagination."

Coin Concepts, Inc., is located at 16 Edgeboro Rd., Unit 5, East Brunswick, NJ 08816. The phone is 908/390-9009 or 800/462-COIN.

cci

COIN CONCEPTS, INC.



Redemption: Your Competitive Edge in a Crowded Field

Redemption! For seven years, we've been saying it's the future. Now it has "arrived," but there are still operators who won't go near it. Too bad, because redemption is one of those unique services an operator can provide to a location. . . a service the operator can help the location keep running. In this sense, it's like leagues and jukeboxes. With redemption, you can select and maintain games, select and supply merchandise, flash the location, and help with marketing and promotion, etc.

Where did it all begin? The Jersey Shore is considered the birthplace of redemption, and it's true. I grew up in Cliffside Park, N.J. and as a kid in the 1950s I remember going to or hearing of places like Belmar, Bradley Beach, Point Pleasant, Asbury Park, Keansberg, Long Branch, Seaside Heights, Atlantic City, Ocean City, Wildwood and Cape May . . . all famous towns on the Jersey Shore. Summer camps would have day trips to the Jersey Shore, and school picnics went there, too.

At Wildwood, I remember what seemed like miles and miles and miles of boardwalk. As an adult I realized Wildwood was just five miles of boardwalk, but to a kid it seemed like 100 miles! I remember all their rides, electromechanical games, and penny movie shows of silent films. . . Mickey Mouse, Laurel and Hardy. I used to play the old baseball games by Chicago Coin, and old pinballs like *Humpty Dumpty*. And I grew up six blocks from Palisade Amusement Park. I remember all the arcades, the rides, the "Funhouse," the "Tunnel of Love," and the group games there.

Going back even farther, I remember Coney Island in Brooklyn, N.Y.: the boardwalk, the ferris wheel, the roller coaster, the famous knishes you would buy on the beach, and more people than there are in China! As a little boy, you would go down to the beach with your towel and stake out your one square foot of sand. That's all you could get. (Maybe two square feet, if you were tough.)

This is the atmosphere our industry created decades ago — fun and sun, games and prizes, coins and machines all wrapped up into one red-white-and-blue package. How much of it is still there? Well, some of it has disappeared. Only a few places are still left at Coney Island like Astroland Park, Dino's Wonder Wheel and a few arcades like El Dorado and Faber's. Brighton Beach is now infamous for gay bath houses; the family entertainment that used to exist there is long gone. Bradley Beach has no more games.

But most of the New Jersey boardwalk arcades are still intact. . . and redemption is still thriving. My most recent trip to a Jersey Shore redemption arcade was a couple of weeks ago. Alpha-Omega supplies equipment to perhaps a dozen arcades up and down the New Jersey coast.

Redemption, in fact, is not only thriving on the

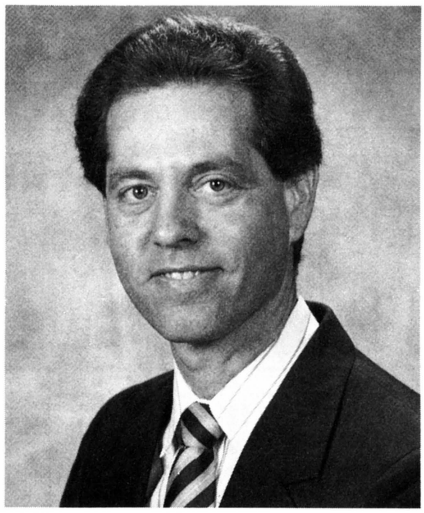
Shore; it's thriving all over the United States . . . and the world. It used to be that the old-timers who ran the Jersey Shore arcades hoarded "the tricks of the trade" to themselves. They had sophisticated point markup systems, ways to really "flash" an arcade (an art in itself, which takes a long time to learn), and so on. Let me tell you, when I started incorporating into my seminars what I learned from these Jersey Shore arcades, the old-timers resented it!

Today most of this knowledge is used in most of the major parks and the big, new arcades around the country. During a recent visit to Dorney Park (Allentown, Pa.), their games manager, Bill Muirhead, showed me all the games he had designed and themed. One example: he took a coin-op knockdown game with racks of cat dolls, removed the cats and replaced them with major league baseball players. He painted a baseball park on the backdrop inside the stands, including the crowds, fences, and so on. He's going to pipe in baseball game sounds and I think it will be one of the park's most successful group games.

At Hershey Park, games manager Dave Luke showed me his latest games and ideas, too. He took one whole arcade and spread the upright videos into clusters, with a sit-down game between each cluster. When you walk in, it looks like a balanced molecular structure! The eye appeal alone will help increase this arcade's growth. Hershey does a lot of redemption, as well.

Smaller than full-blown amusement parks, but larger than the "typical" arcade of 10 years ago, a new class of location is springing up that combines the old redemption magic with the latest high-tech and marketing appeal. I'm talking about large family entertainment centers (30,000 sq. ft. and up . . . some as large as 60,000 sq. ft.). They're springing up all over the country and Alpha-Omega is getting very involved in them. We're putting in 100 videos, and 50 to 60 redemption pieces, per center. We operate some, consult for others and sell equipment to still others.

As stated, these centers are springing up all over the country. In



the last six or eight months, I'd estimate half a dozen of these mega-arcades have opened; that many more will open in the next month or so . . . and that's just the ones I know about! Most of these centers are not owned and run by industry veterans, either. It's yet another example of people from outside our industry, coming in and deciding to "do it big, do it right." They're not afraid to spring for a couple of million dollars to set their places up.

So we've gone from the Jersey Shore, to the video arcades of the '70s and '80s, to the family entertainment complexes of the '90s. What does it all mean? It means the broad amusement industry is trying to build mini-amusement parks indoors, so customers can use them all year long. It's getting very difficult to run a high-tech place just for 12 to 14 weeks in the summer. This represents a natural progression of the amusement industry, a solid segment that will find a profitable niche. Not everybody can keep running down to Disneyland all the time; it's too expensive and if you work you can't take the time off. People want to stay close to home . . . and the amusement industry, as always, comes up with the answer.

For the typical amusement operator, it means new customers, but also new competition. These new centers are expanding the amusement industry's customer base by bringing in parents, grandparents and little kids — not just teenagers. But they're also shifting money away from existing, smaller, typical street arcades and bowling center game rooms. However, due to the increased customer base, I'd have to say this trend is positive overall for the industry. We're taking one step closer to the ultra-professionalism of the big amusement parks.

Small operators can't just ignore all this. They need to respond. They need to educate themselves. They need to join their associations and react to change. And one important way to respond, is by getting involved in redemption. In our area, we continue to see the mom and pops falling by the wayside. But those who make the effort to learn, are surviving. Education is strength. The successful operator is the one who reacts to change properly, and quickly.

Unfortunately, most operators think all of this is nonsense. They want to keep doing what worked 20 years ago. They don't want to learn anything new; they don't want to change. They don't even go to trade shows, much less attend and learn from seminars! Some call it a laid-back attitude. To me, it's plain laziness. And in the long run, the lazy don't survive.

This message was reinforced for me recently at an auction I attended as a sponsor for AMOA New Jersey: all the old video games on the auction block sold for peanuts. Many were sold for parts at ridiculous, "sacrifice" prices. This seemed to symbolize the recent history of our industry . . . a chapter which is now closed. (By the way, the only videos that sold for $100 and up, were a few classic pre-1983 units whose names had nostalgia value.)

One simple truth about this industry is, we put our games where the people are. Another simple truth is, we need to put in the games that people want to play. So any successful operator has to figure out where the people are, and put their games in those places. You have to stay current, and redemption is one of the best ways to do that. Take the old classics and change the merchandise. Yes, it takes lots of work, a big investment, and lots of time. But to put it bluntly, do you want to survive, or don't you? The industry is changing and good operators know they have to change with it.

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SEGA WAKES UP A "SLEEPER"

Sega enters redemption fray with interchangeable maze games; well-built, low-cost units offer big fun & require pure skill

Sega Enterprises is about to show what happens when one of coin-op's largest and most successful video giants decides to market a line of solid redemption product. They are starting with some nifty interchangeable upright skill maze games *(Hi Tension, Awesome Rat* and *Awesome Loop),* licensed from a clever little firm called Quick $ilver Development Co.

These products debuted about a year ago and were "sleepers" — handsomely built, cleverly themed, reliably engineered . . . and earning beautifully for the few operators who had them. Sega's Marketing and Sales Director Ken Anderson latched onto the products' potential and President Tom Petit agreed they'd be a fine kick-off for the Sega redemption line.

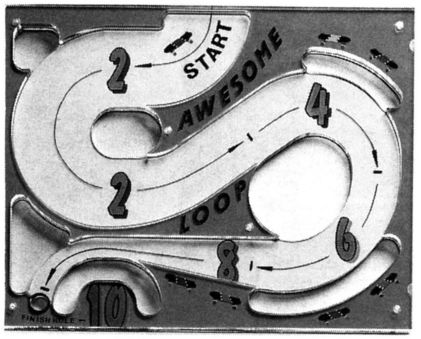
Dealers flew into Sega's offices in San Jose, Calif. for a preview. They learned that *Hi Tension* and its two conversions are just the beginning. "This is basically a statement saying we are in the redemption business," explained Sega's John Hill. "The market is hungry for redemption product. Many new centers are opening and more people are getting interested all the time. We're looking at developing in-house product, as well as more licensing possibilities, to bring Sega into the redemption forefront."

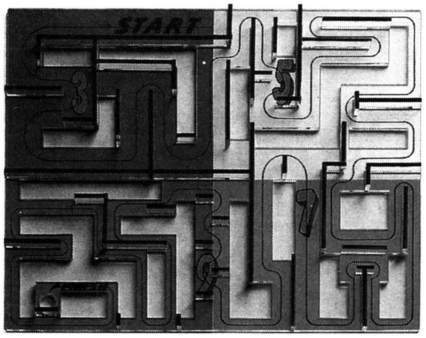
These three convertible maze games are a fine start. Gameplay is simplicity itself: you hold a joystick to precisely control the tilt and angle of the playfield, changing it second by second, so as to guide a pinball around a maze, trying to complete the course and avoid drop-holes. Sounds easy, yes? But it's not! *Awesome Loop* is (relatively speaking) the easiest, with big pathways and only a few holes to avoid. The game gets harder with *Awesome Rat* (more holes, smaller pathways). Finally, if you can navigate the tiny, twisting paths of *Hi Tension,* while avoiding the huge number of treacherous drop-holes, you qualify for Brain Surgeon School.

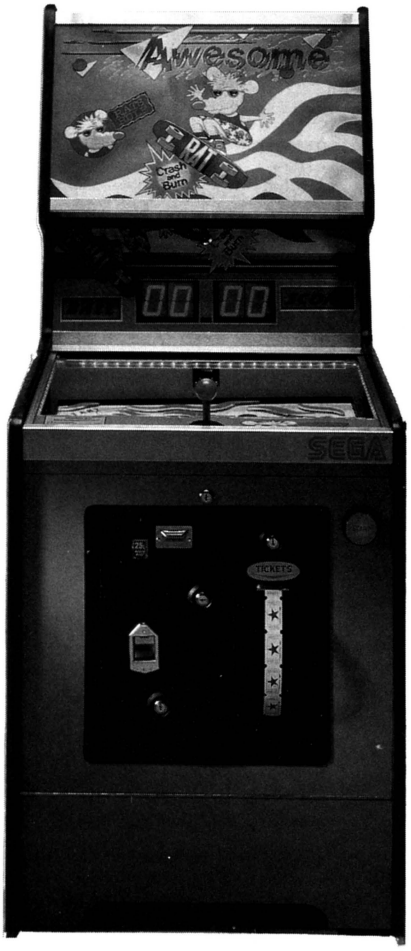


With the new redemption products are Sega's Director of Sales & Marketing Ken Anderson, President Tom Petit and Regional Sales Manager.









Hi Tension, et al, were so well engineered by the original manufacturer that all Sega had to do was put its logo on the marquee. The plywood cabinets are built at Grand Products and themed with excellent art, lighting and music. Scoring, coinage, ticket reward levels, etc. are totally electronic (preset by Sega, but you can adjust everything to fit your own location needs). Self-diagnostics are part of the package. Games come with a mechanical joystick and a reliable Deltronics ticket vender. "It's so well engineered that one location has reported no problems after 82,000 plays!" said one Sega exec.

For more information, contact your authorized Sega distributor, or for dealer referral contact Sega Enterprises USA at 408/435-6337.



Above: Sega's new marketing coordinator Elsa Rodriguez with John Hill. **Below:** John Hill shows off the new goods...they are interchangeable upright skill games that, of course, dispense tickets.



Operators will love the big earnings (easily comparable to a top video in one Bay Area arcade, said Sega; other reliable operators have tested the piece for nine months and report similar results). Operators will also like the reasonable cost (well below a "typical" redemption game price) and they'll positively swoon over the cheap conversion kits (graphics and maze boards). Operators will also appreciate the easy "30 minutes with a screwdriver" conversion process which gives the basic system so much flexibility and variety. As time goes on, Sega will offer additional new playfields, too, so as to keep gameplay fresh and exciting.

Sega has picked a winner here.

LAZER-TRON: REDEMPTION'S "IDEA FACTORY"

innovative products under wraps will debut later this year; also, firm now testing clever program for "street redemption"

Get ready, world. Northern California's "redemption idea factory" is cranking up the creative machinery. After designing hits like *Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe* and *Bank-It,* the enthusiastic folks at Lazer-Tron Corp. (Pleasanton, Calif.) are now finalizing production details for a couple of very exciting new products.

Also, Lazer-Tron is now testing a whole new Redemption Street Program that will finally make it a "no brainer" for street operators and their locations to run redemption equipment and award prizes to redemption players. No attendants, no tickets, no fuss. No location employee time wasted as the cashier or bartender gives a kid a stick of gum or a penny comb. Sound good? Then keep reading!

A "TEASE" FOR NEW GAMES

Unfortunately, we can't give you any details about the two new games yet. Lazer-Tron's Norm Petermeier, Matt Kelly, Brian Kelly and Ron Carrara swore us to secrecy. However, we did personally preview both items at the firm's headquarters...and we were impressed. Each is a very imaginative update on a different redemption classic. Both are hi-tech, 1990s-themed pieces which will add a whole new level of player appeal.

One of the new products is almost sure to be a knockout with girls and women (that demographic slice that the industry is always trying to figure out how to capture). The other is going to be a killer with boys and men, including little kids, dads and granddads. You'll read more about both games in a few months. And, no doubt, you'll hear about them from arcades that will earn big bucks with these new pieces! While recent Lazer-Tron hits have been marketed by Capcom and Data East under



Out in front of the Lazer-Tron offices and factory: Marketing VP Matt Kelly, Production Chief Victoria Krenz & Sales VP Ron Carrara.

license, the two new games will probably be built, marketed and sold by Lazer-Tron itself.

STREET REDEMPTION IS COMING

Now, we **can** tell you about Lazer-Tron's intriguing new program for street redemption. Said Marketing VP Matt Kelly: "We want to devise games that can bring redemption to pizza places, bowling centers, sports bars and other locations that have the right customer base, but just haven't been able or willing to accommodate tickets, stock a merchandise counter, or devote employee time to redeeming points for prizes."

How will Lazer-Tron get around these obstacles? "We're working on a system to automate the process of redeeming points won by customers," Matt explained. "First, we're adapting some of our games, plus several classic and top-earning redemption pieces such as *Skee Ball* and *Rock 'n Bowl,* to vend tokens, not tickets. Next, we're adapting a big Rowe vending machine to take those tokens and redeem them for prizes: everything from sunglasses and wallets to toy handcuffs and candy bars." Matt added that the mega-gigantic Automatic Merchandising firm had agreed to pilot the test program; the first location test starts June 10 in a pizza parlor game room and the second kicks off in a bowling center game room during July.

The Lazer-Tron guys are bubbling over with enthusiasm about this idea. "We're going to offer a turnkey redemption package for the street operator, including appropriate, vendable prizes from Nanco," Matt smiled. "We anticipate tripling revenue in viable street locations which have only videos and pins so far."

The street program will offer packages of recommended games. One such package is expected to include seven titles (Lazer-Tron's *Hop-A-Tic-Tac Toe* and *Bank-It* (under license by Data East and Capcom, respectively); Data East's *Wacky Gator;* National Sports Games' *UB-QB;* Bromley's *Rock 'N' Bowl;* and of course the classic *Skee Ball* from the company of the same name. More or different titles may be recommended for other, larger street stops.)

"Our major goal here is to broaden the base of redemption locations," explained VP of Sales Ron Carrara. "We estimate there are about 6,000 arcades and game rooms nationwide, but only half have redemption equipment. We'd like to encourage the other half to get involved as well as street operators."

AND CURRENTLY...

While they're gearing up for these ambitious projects, the Lazer-Tron guys and gals are in the pro-

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HOLLYWOODS ARE BACK TO THE HIGH QUALITY & BASICS OF YEARS AGO



With new *Vine Climb,* Engineering VP Bryan Kelly, President Norm Petermeier, Sales VP Ron Carrara and Marketing VP Matt Kelly.

cess of helping operators convert their *Space Shuttle* lazer gun shooting games, via kit, to a nifty jungle-themed item called *Vine Climb.* If you haven't seen it, check out the light-up monkeys and the incredible attention-grabbing jungle soundtrack (including a great Tarzan yell, elephants trumpeting, parrot calls, monkeys screeching, etc.).

All in all, Lazer-Tron's track record to date and their exciting future plans constitute a very impressive achievement for such a young company. The firm debuted its first coin-op shooting gallery, *Haunted House,* at the 1989 Parks show. It won immediate purchase orders from amusement parks and carnivals. Their *Shuttle Launch* followed in 1990, proving to be a steady earner for family-oriented stops like minigolf courses and Chuck E. Cheese type restaurant/arcades. Last year, Lazer-Tron jumped to the redemption forefront with *Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe* (a technically sophisticated game you'll be hearing more about). Next they burst forth with *Bank-It,* an even more complex and sophisticated piece of engineering which one redemption expert named "best new redemption game" of the 1991 AMOA Expo. Lazer-Tron says by year's end, this one will have earned a place at the top of the redemption earning charts.

LAZER-TRON'S TEAM

The source of all this innovation is a well-integrated team combining creative talent, management expertise, and industry experience. Lazer-Tron's president is Norm Petermeier, holder of two masters degrees (electrical engineering and business administration) and former president of the $30 million telecommunications giant TTI Corp.

VP of Engineering Bryan Kelly is described as the "quiet genius" behind much of Lazer-Tron's innovative ideas and classy technical execution. (In fact, the firm's product line grew out of a laser-based engineering project that Bryan and a friend crafted for the San Diego State University physics department.) Today Bryan works with four full-time engineers and five more on a consulting basis. "Being near the Silicon Valley is a tremendous asset for us," Bryan said. "We hope to keep our games out in the technological lead."

Matt Kelly (Bryan's brother) is VP of Marketing. He oversees development of new products, taking Bryan's ideas and refining them to appeal to the multi-level redemption customer base: distributors, operators, arcades, game rooms, and players including every member of the family. "Getting something back is what redemption's all about," he declared. "Kids play for the thrill of just walking around with a string of tickets in their hands, even before they think about trading them in for a prize."

Industry vet Ron Carrara is VP of Sales, concentrating on expanding and strengthening Lazer-Tron's distributor network. It's a familiar arena for him, because Ron has 18 years of experience with dealerships like Bally, C.A. Robinson and Betson. "I saw how the market was changing towards redemption games and after talking to Lazer-Tron, I felt they had very exciting products in development," Ron said. "I believe we'll shortly have the finest line of redemption equipment available."

With a total staff of around 25 (including calm, capable production chief Vicky Krenz), Lazer-Tron does its R&D, marketing and production from 15,000 sq. ft. in an industrial park in Pleasanton, a classy community about 45 minutes east of San Francisco. Their phone is 510/460-0873.

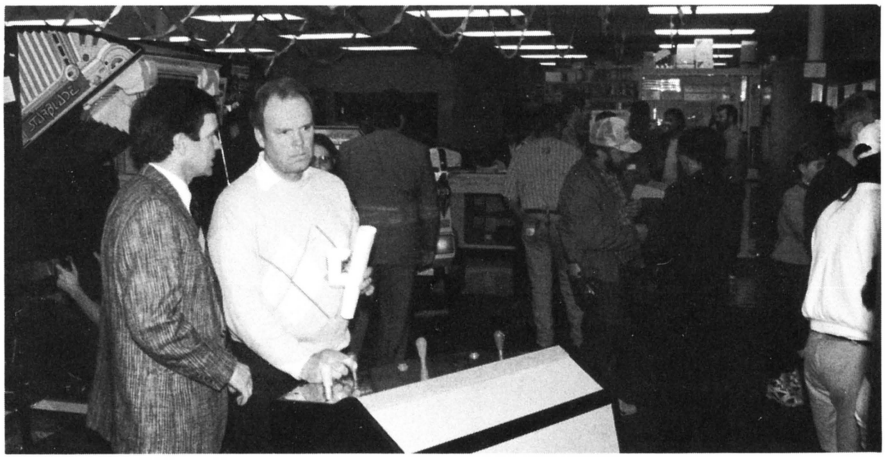
GREAT KICK-OFF FOR GENERAL'S NEW SITE

General Coin shows off big new Portland facility; fine post-ACME attendance seen there and in Seattle

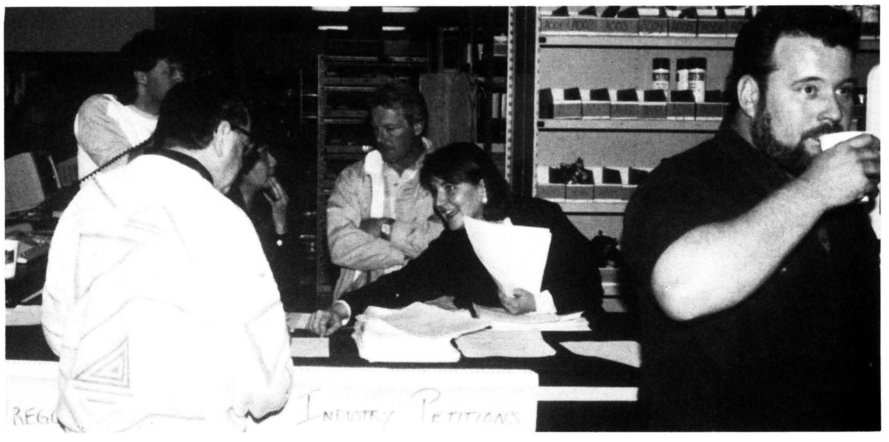
The industry's looking up these days and General Coin Distributing is smiling with a new, modern facility just in time for the spring and summer season. Many guests got their first look at the new place during a smashing post-ACME open house, held on April 10. The event marked General Coin's first major function since moving four months ago to the 25,000-sq.-ft. location in northwest Portland. (It's located at 2515 NW Nicholai St., Portland, OR 97210. Phone is 503/274-1425.)

Kicking off the event was a standing-room-only redemption seminar, which took place in the new building's seminar room. Special guest speakers were Betson's John Margold and Nancy Sales' George Smith. A packed product show followed, with guests enjoying a huge array of redemption games, videos, pins, large arcade simulators and vending equipment (the new Frito-Lay indemnities snack machine was a star in that department). Food catered by Buster's Bar-B-Que offered up "some of the best ribs and chicken west of San Antonio!" according to showgoers. Also, operators had a chance to put their signatures on petitions which would return video poker to the coin industry (the Oregon Citizens for Private Industry).

General Coin's Seattle site also enjoyed an excellent turnout of operators and factory reps during their show on April 8. Manager Jerry Estes and his crew organized the event, providing a great variety of equipment. Redemption product was highlighted here as in Portland. "I think we have established a tradition of well-attended open houses," commented Jerry. "It's great to see so many new and old faces every year!"



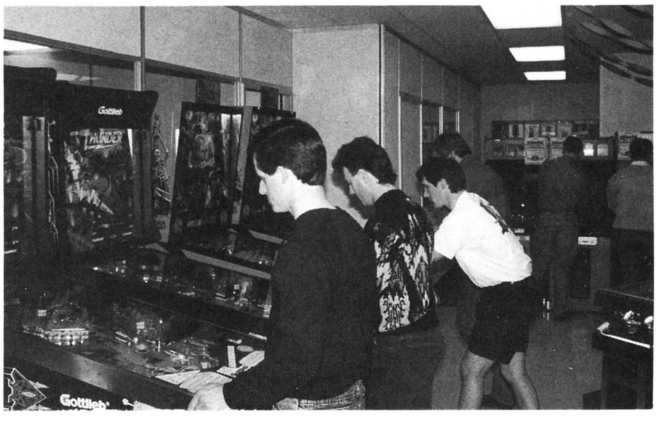
General Coin's Mike McWilliams discusses the merits of Dynamo's large *HS-13* cabinet with Lee Pratt of Pride Vending at the open house (the first held in the new Portland facility).



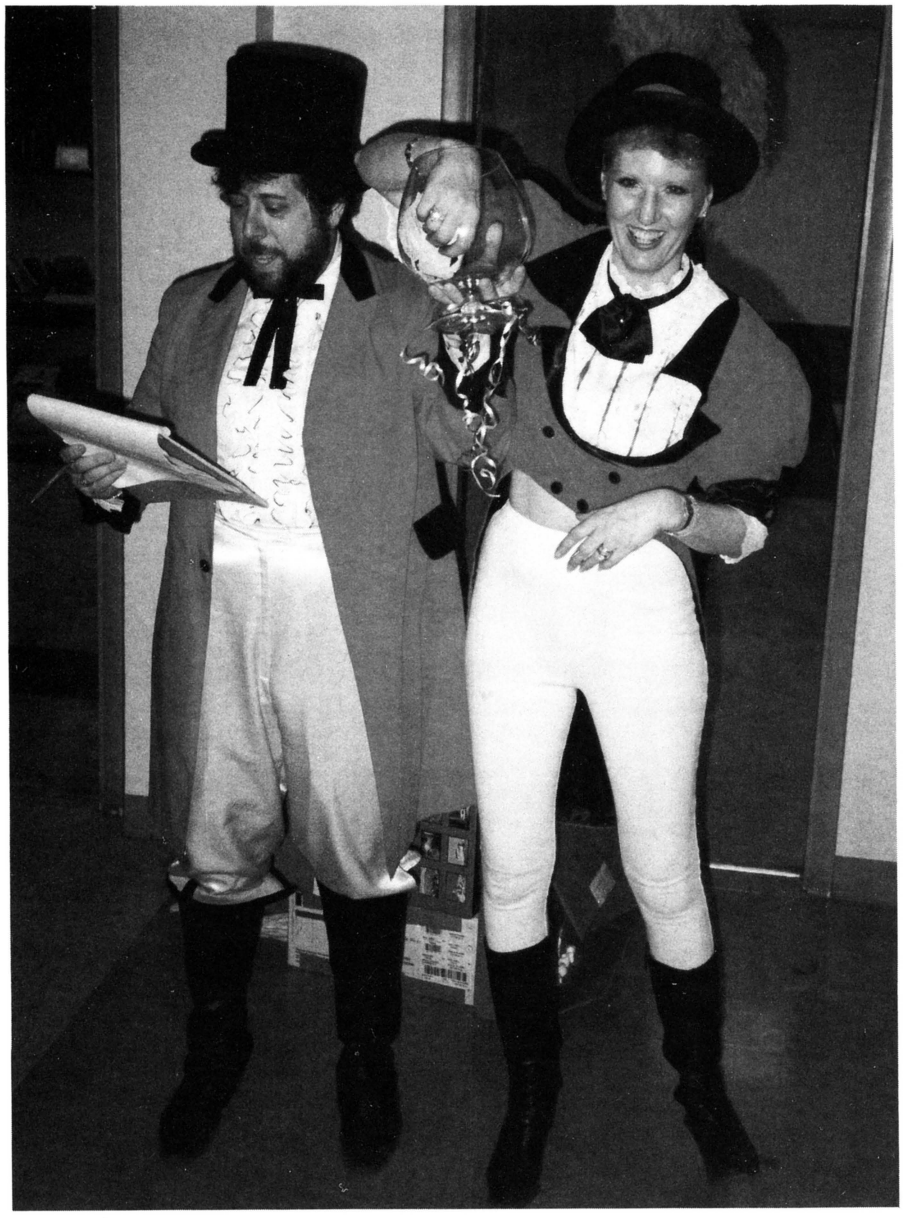
Bill Taylor of Video Dist. gets instruction from Christi Robinson of the Oregonians for Private Industry group. Assisting Christi are General Coin's parts guru Chuck Lampe, Faye McWilliams and Oregon vidpoker chief Rick Geraghty. In the foreground is Jim Heaton of Diamond M/Avalon.



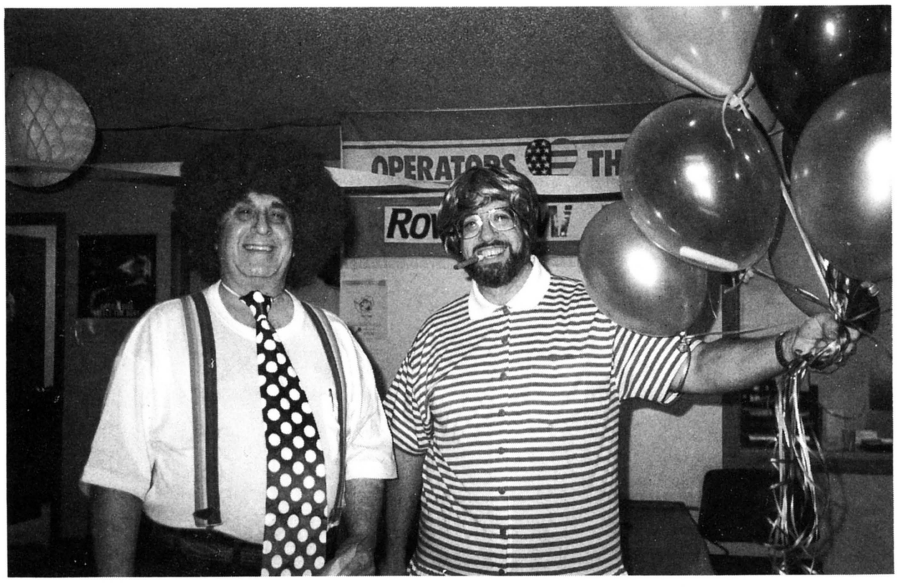
General Coin's new seminar room doubles as a super music room.



Hook & *Operation Thunder* pinballs were popular with customers.



Ringmasters Rich and Bev Babich (in costume, of course) at their April 4 open house.



Miltie Babich (right) with Bill Grommett at the fun new product celebration.

THE COLORADO CIRCUS

Colorado Game & Vending Exchange goes "under the big top" for their delightful post-ACME open

Ladies and gentlemen, presenting the greatest show on Earth! Rich and Bev Babich were the ringmasters on Saturday, April 4 as the Colorado Game & Vending Exchange (Denver) held its post-ACME open house. Two parachutes draped from the warehouse ceiling made for a real "Under the Big Top" circus atmosphere, with floors and walls also decorated to reflect the circus theme. The dealer's staff also dressed in circus garb, including clowns (like Harry Popiel, Bill Grommett, Rory Cook and others) plus a high-wire artist (Tom Grobe).

Over 500 people enjoyed themselves from 11AM to 5PM with a great spread of choice new equipment, plus an extravaganza of live entertainment. The latter included a guest appearance by Denver Nuggets mascot "Rocky the Mountain Lion," face painters, a caricature artist and a clown who made balloon animals. Circus food was abundant, too — cotton candy, snow cones, hot dogs, curly fries, you name it.

By the way, distributor Rich Babich also won the unanimous vote for best costume. Besides acting as ringmaster, he put in a brief appearance as the bearded lady . . . someone no circus should be without!

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MUSIC-VEND'S ROUND-UP

cowboy theme enlivens successful Music-Vend open house



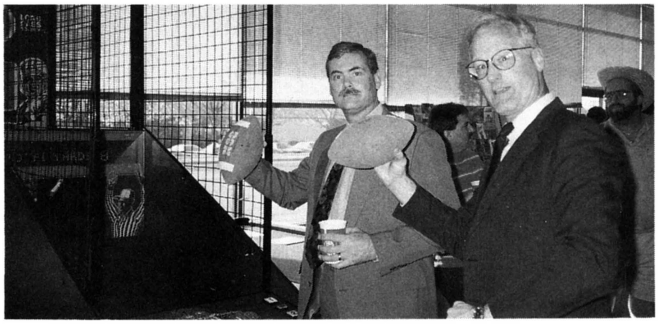
Cowpoke Steve Levy of Music-Vend takes aim at manufacturing hombre Tim Jackson.

Howdy, pardner! The good folks at Music-Vend Distributing (Seattle, Wash.) threw a post-ACME open house party with a Western theme on March 31. Operators were encouraged to dress accordingly, with Art and Mickey McGammon (Gametown Family Fun Center) winning the prize for "best Western git-ups." Other operators were grinnin' like mules eating briar bushes at the fine spread of new equipment.

Besides doing business, guests also moseyed over to the chuck wagon for a delicious buffet spread. Tasty vittles included barbecued chicken, pork ribs, beans, potato salad and chocolate peanut butter pie (or New York cheesecake for any of those fancy Eastern dudes). Said Music-Vend's Lily Shade: "It was one great hoe-down!"



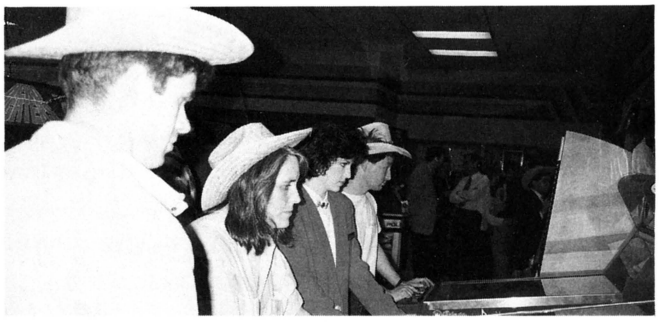
At the event, SNK's Tracy Tate, Specialty Entertainment's Clay Dubofsky and Atari's Elaine Shirley by the Neo•Geo line-up.



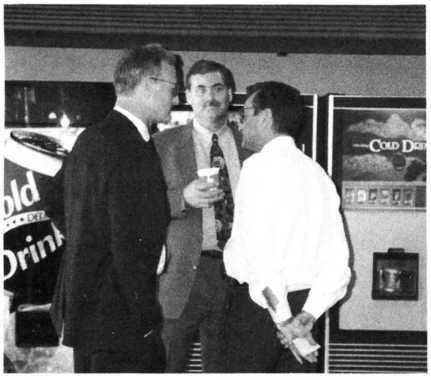
Sean Layman and Tony Walker of City Games get their throwing arms ready for a round of football play on National Sports Games' *UB-QB.*



Tom Timm (Timm Enterprises), Gary Rouse (technician for Music-Vend) and Dave Zinn of Medalist having some dart-throwing fun.



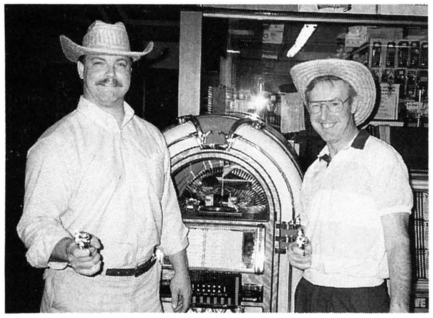
At the line of pinball machines are Specialty Entertainment's Jim Bosanko and Music-Vend's Theresa Anderson, among others.



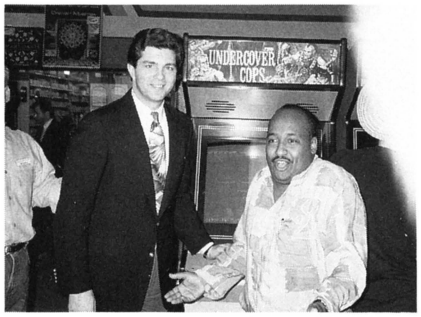
Above: City Games' Tony Walker & Sean Layman with Music-Vend's Ray Galante.

Right: American Technos' Rick Vandenbrink, Amusement Enterprises' Van West, Music-Vend/Dunis' Michael Damtew and Taito's Emilio Cabrera at the open house.





Whoa, pardners! Don't shoot! We just want a photo! Here are Ralph Carlson and Jim Schweigert of Nelson & Michael Distributors.



Irem's Drew Maniscalco and Music-Vend/Dunis' Michael Damtew by the former's neat-o *Undercover Cops* video game.



Doug Shaver of Intercity Vending says howdy to Romstar's Tim Jackson and checks out the new *Varth* video action.



Desperados Mickey & Art McGammon (Gametown) "tell" Capcom's Brian Duke that they want a trainload of *S.F. II: Champion Editions!*



Is that Todd Cravens telling the tall tale of the big fish that got away? (That's fellow Leprechauner Bill Cravens to his right.)



Bill Masterman of Masterman Vending enjoys some open house conversation while others check out the new products.



Above: It wouldn't be right if we didn't have a photo of Capcom's Brian Duke *really* hamming it up! He's up on top of a *Knights of the Round* nearby a *SFII:CE.*

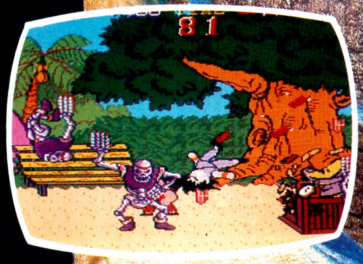
Right: Atari's Mike Taylor (right) tells Todd Brown of Metro Amusement about all the features on his *Relief Pitcher* baseball video.



Dragon Bowl

LET'S GO FANTASTIC WORLD TO TAKE THE 7 BALLS FROM RARE DRAGON!









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VIDEO INVERSION AND YOU

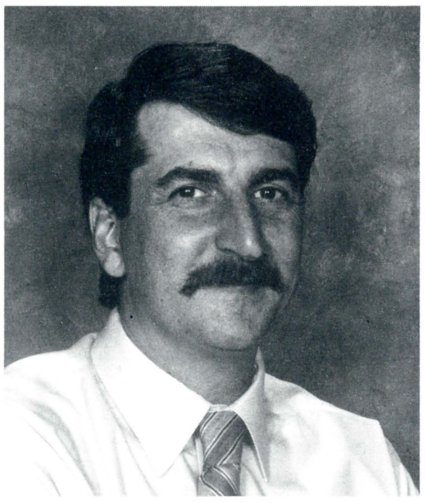
using older Nintendo monitors in new conversions

by RANDY FROMM

The images you see on any television screen are made from combinations of red, green and blue; the three 'primary colors' of light. By combining these three primary colors in different combinations, we can make any color we want. For example, combining any two of the primary colors will create one of the three 'secondary colors.' Red and blue combine to make magenta. Red and green mix to form yellow while blue and green blend together to create a light turquoise color known as cyan (pronounced sigh-an with the accent on the last syllable.) Combining all three colors makes white while the absence of all color creates black.

VIDEO CONTROLS THE COLOR

Most of you are familiar with the red, green and blue 'video' wires that connect the logic board to the monitor in a video game. On the JAMMA connector the three video outputs of the logic board are at pins



12, 13 and N. These wires carry the three 'video signals' from the logic board to the video input connector of the monitor.

The video signals control the video amplifiers in the monitor which, in turn, regulate how much red, green and blue will show on the screen. Higher voltages at the monitor's video input connector will make a color very bright (tentative new AMOA standards set maximum video output voltage from the logic board at two volts.) Lower voltages will produce correspondingly dimmer colors. Naturally, if the video voltage is zero, there will be no color at all.

Let's say, for example, that we want to display a picture of a brightly colored parrot on the screen. As the monitor scans the area of Polly's red head, only the red video signal will have any voltage on it. Since we want our parrot to have a bright red head, we crank the red video voltage up all the way to two volts. The green video signal and the blue video signal will both be at zero volts.

As the monitor scans the yellow ring of feathers around the parrot's throat, the green gun is turned on in addition to the red gun. The combination of red and green creates Polly's bright yellow collar.

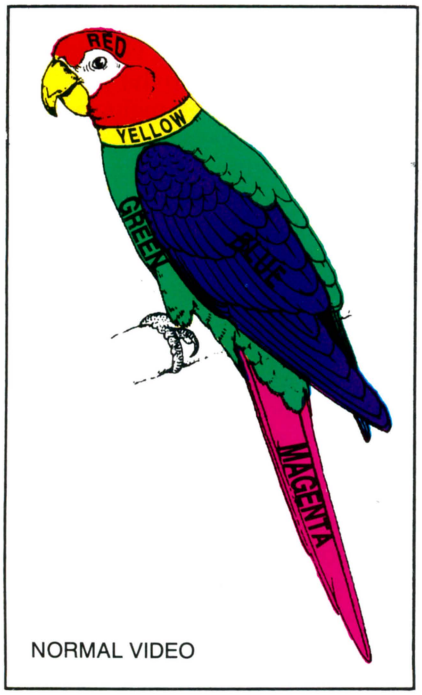
The green body comes next, so only the green video output will carry a signal now. But Polly's body is not as bright as his head so the green video signal will be at a somewhat lower voltage; perhaps only a volt and a half or so. This will produce a dimmer, darker green color.

Polly's wings are pure blue. Finally, his tail combines bright red with bright blue to create a beautiful magenta. Here, the green video is at zero volts with the red and blue video at two volts each.

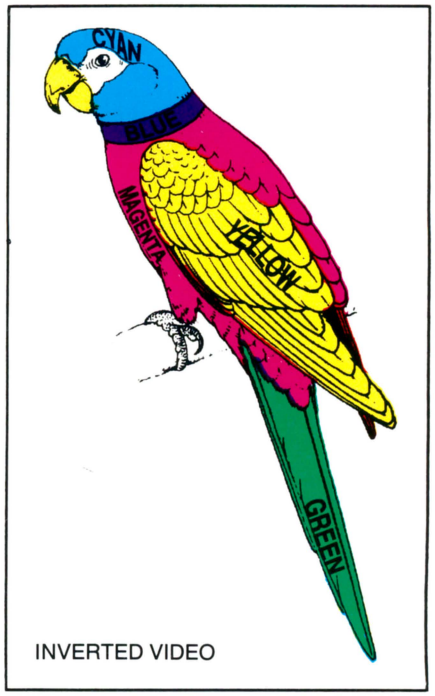
HAS THIS HAPPENED TO YOU?

You swap one Nintendo monitor for another (or install a Nintendo monitor in a non-Nintendo video game or use a Nintendo monitor with a conversion kit) and the colors come out very strange. Objects that are supposed to be blue are now bright yellow. Green things have turned a lovely shade of magenta. Even the completely black background has suddenly changed to bright white!

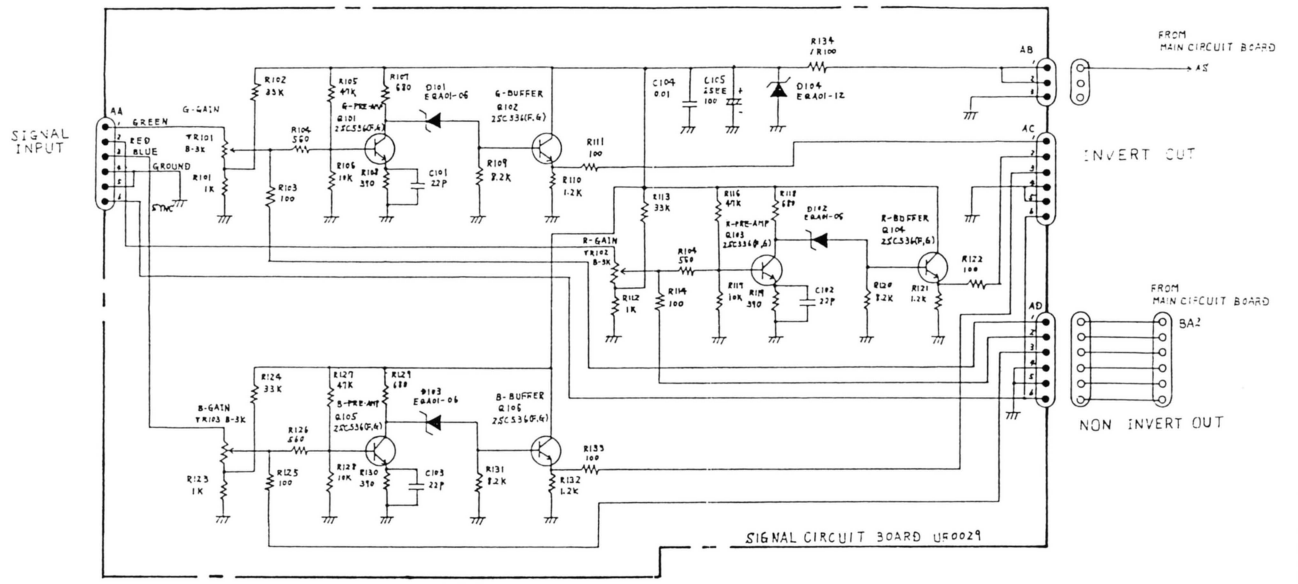
What happened? Re-read that last sentence above for an important clue. If the black part of the



NORMAL VIDEO



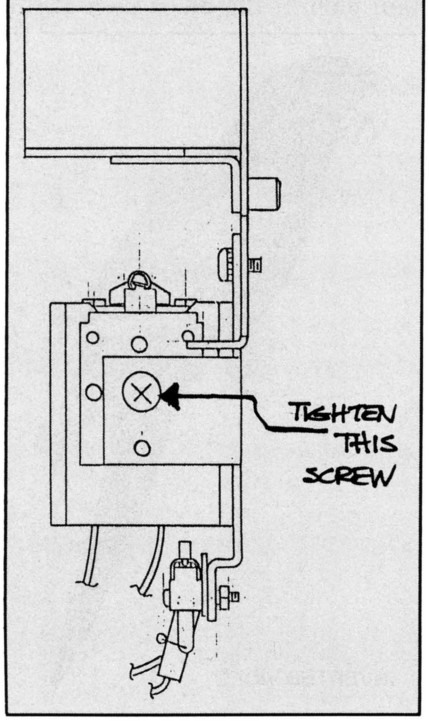
INVERTED VIDEO



Nintendo's video inverter PCB converts positive video into negative video.

D.E. STAR TREK *BULLETIN*

Data East pinball recently sent out a service bulletin addressing the problem of *Star Trek's* ramp mechanism. It seems that the up-and-down ramp doesn't always come down. To combat the dilemma, Data East offered the following solution: First, check the "ramp up" switch to insure it is closed when the ramp is up. If the switch is functioning properly, check to make sure the coil bobbin screw on the latching mechanism is secured. Data East pinball has advised that a limited number of games did not have loctite applied. They suggest a loctite job and a tightening up of the bobbin screw at future maintenance service jobs. Please refer to diagram for black and white instructions.



screen has turned white, the color signals must be working backwards! Instead of turning on each color by applying a positive voltage to the video inputs, the Nintendo's red, green and blue circuits are being turned off! Likewise, when the video input voltage is zero, the colors are turned on full blast. In other words, low voltage (or no voltage) turns each color on while higher voltage turns the colors off!

It's called 'negative video' and all the early Nintendo games were engineered this way. Although the negative video system works perfectly well, it clearly did not become the industry standard as all other video games produce normal, positive video signals. Only Nintendo used the negative video system.

What happens if you run a positive video signal into the negative video input of a Nintendo monitor? Let's try it with Polly and see what happens. Polly's head is supposed to be red but now the red video amplifier will be deactivated by the high video voltage and the blue and green video amplifiers will be turned on full instead. Polly's head will be bright cyan.

Polly's yellow collar has turned blue while his blue wings are now yellow. His green body is now magenta and his tail is green. Everything is just the opposite of what it should be! They don't call it negative video for nuthin' you know. The picture will look like a color film negative!

CONVERTING POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE

Nintendo games have two different monitors. One type is manufactured by Sharp (not to be confused with Sharp Image.) The other is manufactured by Sanyo. It's easy to tell the difference between the two. The Sharp has a row of adjustments in the front of the monitor, just under the picture tube. The Sanyo adjustments are on a separate little printed circuit board at the back of the monitor.

In some versions of the Sanyo monitor, you will find a small printed circuit board mounted on the right side of the monitor. It's called a 'video inverter' board. The video inverter board will flip the video voltage upside-down, changing positive video into negative video or negative video into positive! In this case, the video inverter board will let you use the Sanyo monitor in any of today's standard positive video systems.

During my arcade school in Orlando, Fla. last month, one of the students brought in an old *Tempest* cabinet that had been converted into an *Arkanoid.* The old X-Y monitor had been replaced with a Sanyo (with an isolation transformer added to power the monitor. See the Jan. 1990 *RePlay).* The game looked fantastic, especially with that dark black glass that *Tempest* had covering the screen.

To use the Sanyo monitor (which requires negative video) the positive

video output of the *Arkanoid* logic board is connected to the signal input of the video inverter board. The inverter changes the positive video into negative video. The inverted video is then connected to the video input of the monitor and everything looks perfect!

If you have a Sanyo monitor without the inverter board, there's still a way that you can use it with positive video. As a matter of fact, the monitor was originally designed to accept positive video but was modified by the removal of a small handful of components and the installation of a few jumper wires.

To convert the Sanyo monitor to accept normal, positive video:

1. Remove the wire jumpers that have been installed in place of transistors TR201, TR202, TR203.
2. Remove R213, R214, R215.
3. Install the following components:
   a. R201, R202, R203 — 100K
   b. R210, R211, R212 — 100K
   c. R213, R214, R215 — 820 ohm
   d. R217, R218, R219 —-560 ohm
   e. TR201, TR202, TR203 — 2SC1815 or equivalent.
   f. C202 — 220uf 16V
   g. D210 — 1N4004

Pretty simple, huh? To make things even easier for you, a complete kit of parts including a schematic diagram and step-by-step instructions is available from Zanen Electronics at 3109 Second St., Lubbock, TX 79415; 806/793-6337. The cost is just $4.95. Ask for kit number 910. It's a great deal so go back into the shop right now and look at those Nintendo monitors you have sitting on the shelf. If they're Sanyo, you should be able to use them in just about any video game.

An entire video inverter board is also available from Louise's Harness Shop at 712 County Road 58, Prattville, AL 36067; 800/365-1941; fax is 205-365-4435 It's called the Color Conversion PCB and sells for just $22.00.

My thanks to Larry Rosenthal and monitor mavin Aubrey Jones for their research assistance.

Copyright June 1, 1992 by Randy Fromm

STUFF & SCHEDULE from RANDY FROMM

Randy Fromm has lots going on for you tech types. First of all, he now offers the "Randy Fromm's Big Blue Book of Really Great Technical Information (the same book he uses for his Arcade School class). It's $34.95 plus $4 postage and handling.

Also available are instructional videotapes. For $39.95 each (plus $4 handling) you can get: Using a Digital Multimeter, Basic Electronics, Semiconductors, Switching Regulator Power Supplies and X-Y Monitors. The $49.95 each (again $4 added to the entire order for handling) titles are: Linear Power Supplies, Raster Scan Monitors and Videogame Conversions (the newest in the series).

And, yep, the famous Randy Fromm's Arcade School is still in session at a site near you! The schedules follow...

TWO-DAY COURSE

(covers power supplies, monitor repair, and use of the digital multi-meter)

Minneapolis, MN.....June 27-28
Salt Lake City, UT.....August 22-23
Los Angeles, CA.....November 21-22
Dallas, TX.....December 5-6

SIX-DAY COURSE

(covers everything the two-day does plus conversions, pinball board repair, linear power supplies, a detailed look at electronic components and replacement, trouble-shooting tricks and more)

Reno, NV.....June 15-20
San Jose, CA.....August 3-8
San Diego, CA.....September 14-19
Nashville, TN.....October 5-10
Chicago, IL.....November 2-7

Of course, you can contact Randy for details by calling his school at 619/593-6131 (fax: 619-593-6132); or write him at 1944 Falmouth Dr., El Cajon, CA 92020-2827.

HELPFUL INFO FROM TWO-BIT SCORE

JAMMA Standard Pinouts

Black		Ground	1	A	Ground		Black
Black		Ground	2	B	Ground		Black
Red	+ 5 Volts		3	C	+ 5 Volts		Red
Red	+ 5 Volts		4	D	+ 5 Volts		Red
Brown	-5 Volts		5	E	-5 Volts		Brown
Orange	+12 Volts		6	F	+12 Volts		Orange
No Connection		Key	7	H	Key		No Connection
White/Yellow	Coin Counter 1		8	J	Coin Counter 2		Purple
White/Green	Coin Lockout		9	K	Coin Lockout		Blue
Yellow	Speaker +		10	L	Speaker -		Black
No Connection			11	M			No Connection
Red	Video Red		12	N	Video Green		Green
Blue	Video Blue		13	P	Video Sync		White
Black	Video Ground		14	R	Service Switch		Grey
Brown/White	Test		15	S	Tilt		Grey/White
White/Blue	Coin Switch 1		16	T	Coin Switch 2		White/Red
White	Start 1 Player		17	U	Start 2 Players		White/Black
Blue	UP	Player 1	18	V	UP	Player 2	White/Blue
Green	DOWN	Player 1	19	W	DOWN	Player 2	White/Green
Orange	LEFT	Player 1	20	X	LEFT	Player 2	White/Orange
Yellow	RIGHT	Player 1	21	Y	RIGHT	Player 2	White/Yellow
Brown	Push #1	Player 1	22	Z	Push #1	Player 2	White/Brown
Purple	Push #2	Player 1	23	a	Push #2	Player 2	White/Purple
Grey	Push #3	Player 1	24	b	Push #3	Player 2	White/Grey
No Connection			25	c			No Connection
No Connection			26	d			No Connection
Black		Ground	27	e	Ground		Black
Black		Ground	28	f	Ground		Black

I get so many requests for the JAMMA pin-out chart that I've about burned out one FAX machine supplying copies of it. I figured you all might like to see it in print again, so here's the most up-to-date version I've been able to put together. I include the wire colors here for completeness, but you should only trust the true pin location when determining the use of a given wire. Keep in mind that the letters G, I, O, and Q are not used when counting on the lettered side of the connector. Bob Sokol

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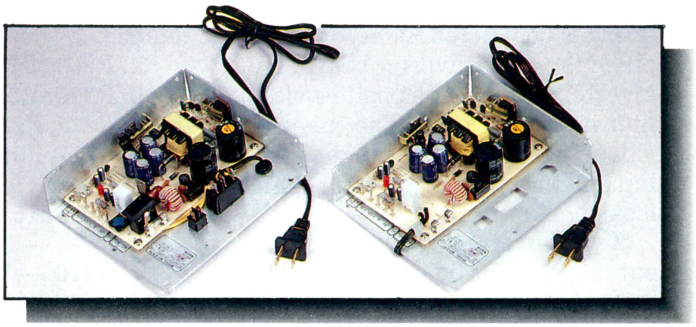
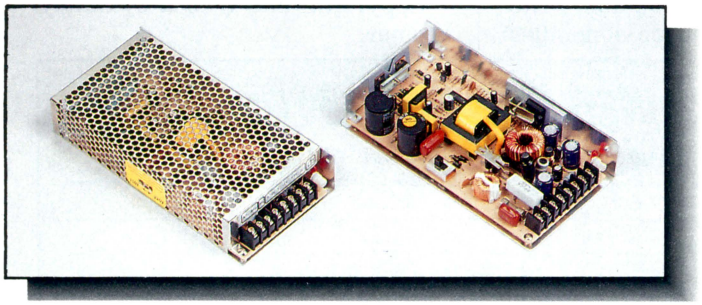
MODEL WY-02 SERIES



OUTPUT VOLTAGE AND CURRENT

MODEL	OUTPUT VOLTAGE	+5 VOLT	+12 VOLT	- 5 VOLT	- 12 VOL12
WY-02C	OUTPUT CURRENT (A)	6	1.5	1	STANDARD
WY-02C-SR		6	1.5	+8V/ 1A	SSR

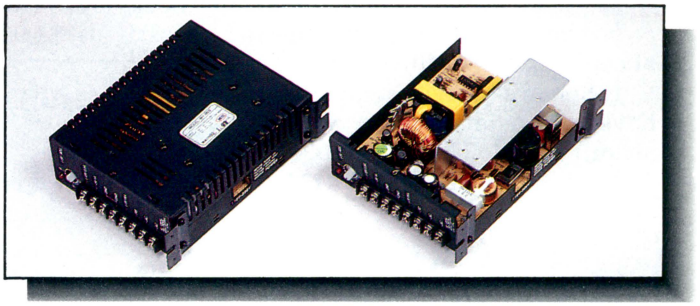
MODEL WY-06 SERIES



OUTPUT VOLTAGE AND CURRENT

MODEL	OUTPUT VOLTAGE	+5 VOLT	+12 VOLT	- 5 VOLT	- 12 VOL12
WY-06C	OUTPUT CURRENT (A)	12	2.5	1	STANDARD
WY-06A-5		18			
WY-06A-12			7.5		

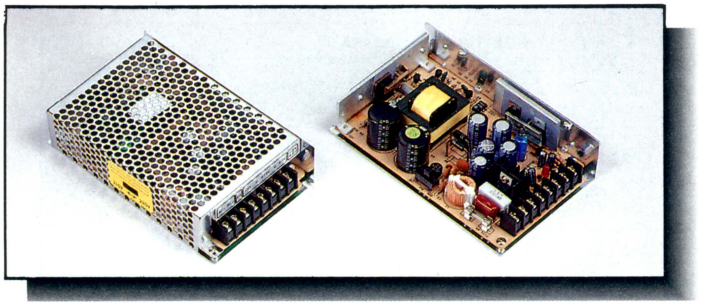
MODEL WY-03C



OUTPUT VOLTAGE AND CURRENT

MODEL	OUTPUT VOLTAGE	+5 VOLT	+12 VOLT	- 5 VOLT	REMARKS
WY-03C	OUTPUT CURRENT (A)	12	2.5	1	STANDARD

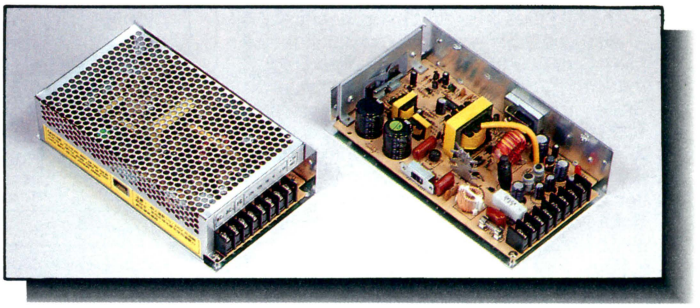
MODEL WY-07 SERIES



OUTPUT VOLTAGE AND CURRENT

MODEL	OUTPUT VOLTAGE	+5 VOLT	+12 VOLT	- 5 VOLT	- 12 VOL12
WY-07C	OUTPUT CURRENT (A)	8	1.5	1	STANDARD
WY-07A-5		12			
WY-07A-12			4.5		

MODEL WY-05 SERIES



OUTPUT VOLTAGE AND CURRENT

MODEL	OUTPUT VOLTAGE	+5 VOLT	+12 VOLT	- 5 VOLT	- 12 VOLT
WY-05C	OUTPUT CURRENT (A)	15	2.5	1	
WY-05D		12	2.5	1	1
WY-05A-5		22			
WY-05A-12			9		

SWITCHING POWER SUPPLY SELECTION GUILD

PWR	MODEL NO.	INPUT (VAC)		+ 5 VOLT							+12 VOLT					-5V	-12V	REMARKS
		90-135	190-260	6A	8A	10A	12A	15A	18A	22A	1.5A	2.5A	4.5A	7.5A	9A	1A	1A	
100	WY-03C	•	•				•					•				•		STANDARD
110	WY-05C	•	•					•				•				•		
110	WY-05D	•	•				•					•				•	•	STANDARD
110	WY-05A-5	•	•							•								
110	WY-05A-12	•	•												•			
100	WY-06C	•	•				•					•				•		STANDARD
100	WY-06A-5	•	•						•									
100	WY-06A-12	•	•											•				
60	WY-07C	•	•		•						•					•		STANDARD
60	WY-07A-5	•	•				•											
60	WY-07A-12	•	•										•					
45	WY-02C	•	•	•							•					•		STANDARD
45	WY-02C-SR	•	•	•							•					+8V 1A		SSR
45																		

ABOUT THE MODEL NUMBER:

WY - XX X - XX

- VOLIAGE (FOR SINGLE OUTPUT ONLY)
  - 5 = single 5 volt output
  - -SR = WITH SSR TO SUPPORT AND HOPPER CONTROL
- NO. OF OUTPUT: A = SINGLE OUTPUT
  - B = DUAL OUTPUT
  - C = THREE (3) OUTPUT
  - D = FOUR (4) OUTPUT
- SPECIFICATION
- WEI - YA

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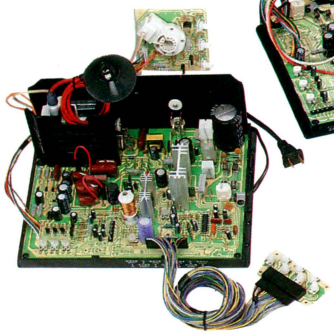
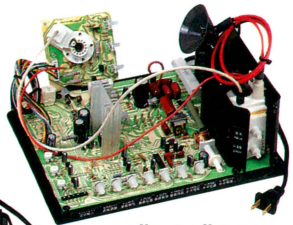
MODEL : 826HR
833HR 828HR

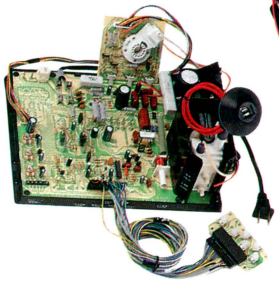


MODEL : 214S/SR
220H/HR



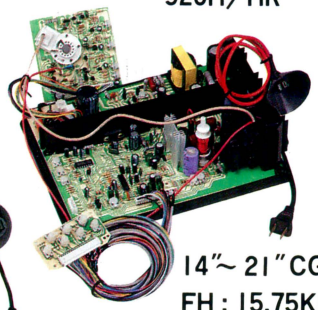
14"~21"CGA
FH : 15.75KHZ

MODEL : 814S/SR
820H/HR



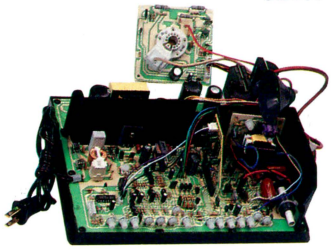
14"~20"CGA
FH : 15.75KHZ

MODEL : 914S/SR
920H/HR

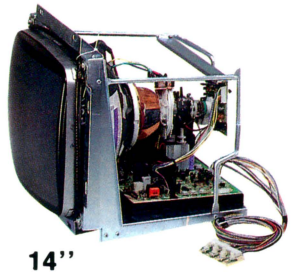


14"~21"CGA
FH : 15.75KHZ

MODEL : 514H
520H

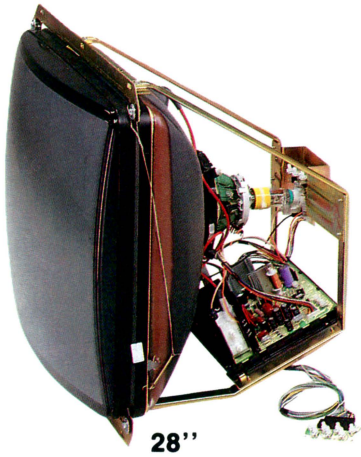


14"~20"VGA
FH : 25K/ 31KHZ

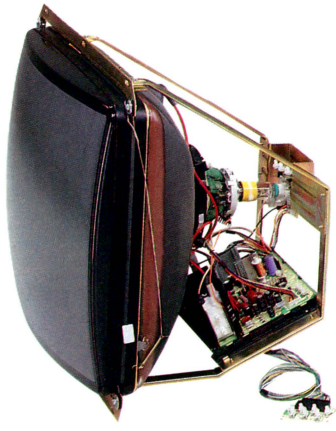


14"

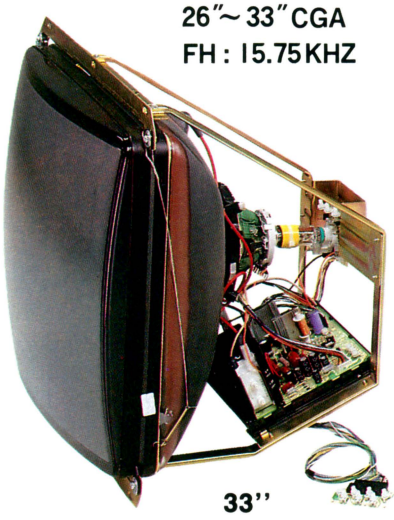
26"~33"CGA
FH : 15.75KHZ



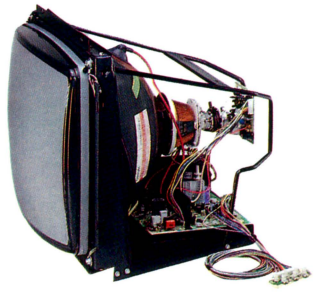
28"



26"



33"



20"/21"(FST)

SELECTION GUILD

FRONT CONTROL		WITHOUT FRONT CONTROL		CPT	INPUT (VAC)		INPUT	SYNC	SCANNING FREQ.		RESOLUTION	YOKE IMPEDANCE	
MONITOR	CHASSIS	MONITOR	CHASSIS	SIZE	110	220	SIGNAL	SIGNAL	HOR.	VERT.	(LINES)	HOR.	VERT.
KS214SR	214SR	KS214S	214S	14"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 2.2 ohm LH : 2.1 mH	RH : 16 ohm LH : 30 mH
KS814SR	814SR	KS814S	814S	14"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 2.2 ohm LH : 2.1 mH	RV : 56 ohm LV : 120 mH
KS914SR	914SR	KS914S	914S	14"	○	○	RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 2.2 ohm LH : 2.1 mH	RV : 16 ohm LV : 30 mH
KS220HR	220HR	KS220H	220H	20"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 2.0 ohm LH : 1.9 mH	RV : 15 ohm LV : 30 mH
KS820HR	820HR	KS820H	820H	20"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 2.0 ohm LH : 1.9 mH	RV : 56 ohm LV : 120 mH
KS920HR	920HR	KS920H	920H	20"	○	○	RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 2.0 ohm LH : 1.9 mH	RV : 15 ohm LV : 30 mH
HS221SR	221SR	KS221S	221S	21"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 2.1 ohm LH : 2.1 mH	RV : 12 ohm LV : 26 mH
KS921SR	921SR	KS921S	921S	21"	○	○	RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 2.1 ohm LH : 2.1 mH	RV : 12 ohm LV : 26 mH
		KS426H	426H	26"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 1.3 ohm LH : 1.5 mH	RV : 9 ohm LV : 25 mH
		KS428H	428H	28"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 1.3 ohm LH : 1.5 mH	RV : 9 ohm LV : 25 mH
		KS433H	433H	33"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 1.3 ohm LH : 1.5 mH	RV : 9 ohm LV : 25mH
KS826HR	826HR	KS826H	826H	26"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 1.3 ohm LH : 1.5 mH	RV : 9 ohm LV : 25 mH
KS828HR	826HR	KS828H	828H	28"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 1.3 ohm LH : 1.5 mH	RV : 9 ohm LV : 25 mH
KS833HR	833HR	KS833H	833H	33"	○		RGB TTL	H/V	15.75 KHZ	60Hz	460(H)×240(V)	RH : 1.3 ohm LH : 1.5 mH	RV : 9 ohm LV : 25 mH
		KS514H		14"	○	○	RGB TTL	H/V	25 KHZ/ 31.48 KHZ	60	720(H)×480(V)		
		KS520H		20"	○	○	RGB TTL	H/V	25 KHZ/ 31.48 KHZ	60	640(H)×480(V)		

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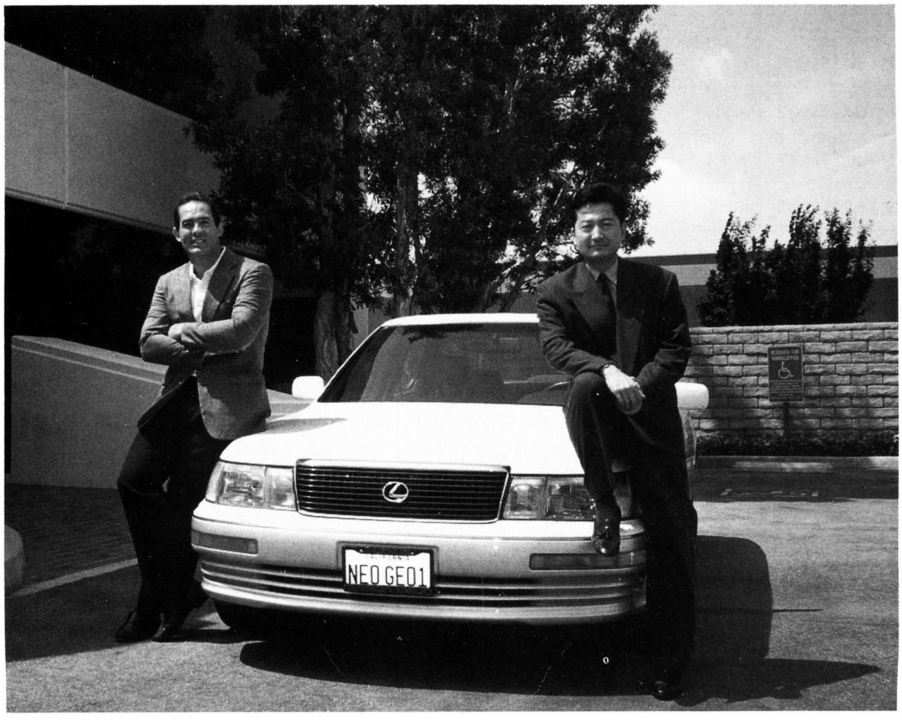
Above: The SNK family in front of the new headquarters in Torrance, Calif. **Below:** Sales VP John Barone and new President Marty Kitazawa out front (check out that license plate!).



SNK: PLANNING FOR CHANGE

their Neo-Geo system has already been a big success; but now SNK has even more ambitious goals & plans

Picture this: you're a top video game factory with over 15,000 hardware units in the field. You've sold 70,000 pieces of software for that system. Half the *RePlay* chart is devoted to your video titles; operators voted a prestigious award to your system cabinet at the last AMOA Expo; and you've just come off your two best sales months ever.

Where do you go from here?

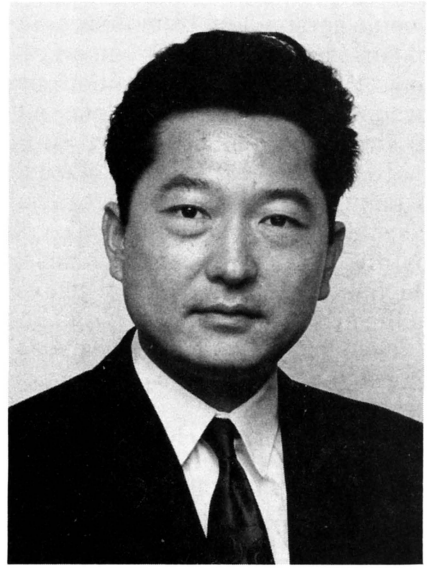
SNK Corp. of America is in this enviable position with their Neo-Geo system and its library of 28 successful titles (so far.) From here, the company says it's just going one place: straight up. "We have big plans for this summer: hot product, innovative marketing and a sales drive to double our market share in a single year," said Senior VP John Barone. Bubbling over with enthusiasm, he explained SNK's ambitious goals and plans from the firm's spacious new headquarters in Torrance, Calif.

Briefly, SNK's plans are as follows: first, the company will release a hot new fighting game in late sum-



NEO•GEO TITLES

Nam-1975
Baseball Stars Professional
Top Player's Golf
Magician Lord
Ninja Combat
Riding Hero
The Super Spy
Cyber Lip
League Bowling
Blue's Journey
Ghost Pilot
Sengoku
King of the Monsters
Alpha Mission II
Burning Fight
Crossed Swords
Super Baseball 2020
Eightman
Robo Army
Thrash Rally
Fatal Fury
Football Frenzy
Soccer Brawl
Mutation Nation
Last Resort
Baseball Stars 2
Ninja Commando
Sengoku 2 (Summer '92)
King of the Monsters 2 (just available)



President Marty Kitazawa

mer which it believes will be a "demand" item. Next, SNK may license other video game factories (including some majors) to produce titles for the Neo-Geo system. Last but far from least, SNK is looking at creative marketing ideas that are in tune with the times.

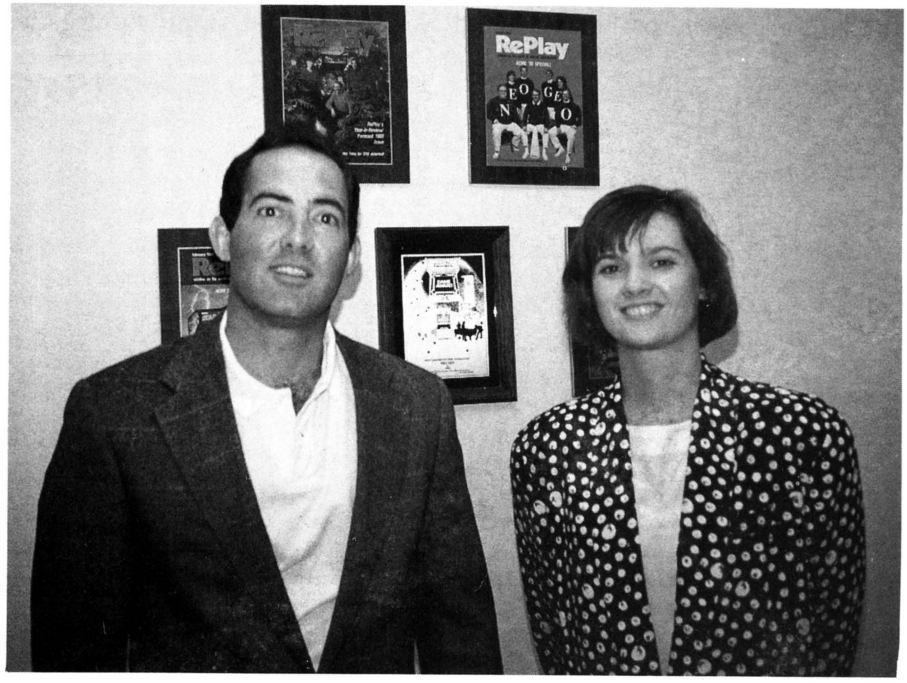
"We have aggressive goals for the next several years," stated John Barone. "Our biggest challenge is to think creatively about new approaches to the market. The rules are always changing in our industry, but today the changes are even more major and fundamental than usual. The industry can't keep doing business in the '90s the same way it did in the '70s."

THE ART OF FIGHTING

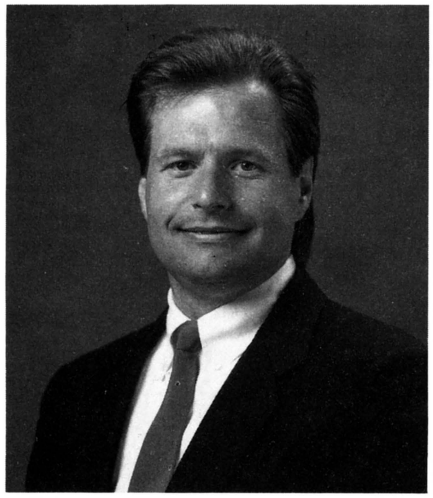
Topping the list is a new street fighting piece which will take the Neo-Geo system to new heights. "Around August we're introducing what we feel is the greatest game we've ever done," John explained. "The tentative title is *The Art of Fighting* and we believe it will create that 'gotta have it right now' sense of urgency that makes a game a super hit."

Most games use 50 or 60 megabytes of computer memory, explained product & marketing manager Susan Jarocki. "However, *The Art of Fighting* will double that. SNK put double the usual number of designers to work on it, and we used our very best designers, too. The result will really put the Neo-Geo system to the test."

What will be new and different about *The Art of Fighting*? Details are under wraps, but SNK did preview a few details. "Unique elements will include the ability of characters to move toward the screen and get bigger, or away from the screen and get smaller, while they are fighting," John said. "Also,



Sales VP John Barone and Susan Jarocki (Product Mgr./Marketing Admin.) in the new offices.



National Sales Manager Tracy Tate

the appearance of characters' faces will change in response to blows, etc. It's a lot more realistic than anything anybody's ever done in the industry."

Coming on the heels of *Fatal Fury*, SNK's most successful Neo-Geo piece to date, the company expects this next fighting game to help boost their system to a new level of market penetration.

EXPANDING MARKET SHARE

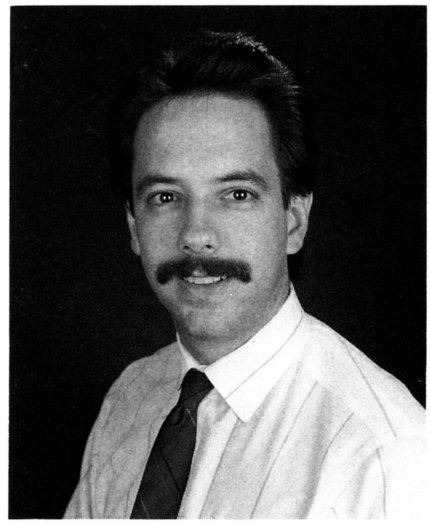
Creative marketing ideas are the next element in SNK's plans. "We've already learned a lot from our success with Neo-Geo so far," John Barone stated. "When we first introduced this concept, it took a long time to overcome the prejudices that people had built up from their past experiences with video game systems. We learned not to position our product primarily as a system, but to stress the quality of each software title as it came along. We only pointed to the system aspect as a secondary selling point. To be competitive in the video game business, the quality of the individual games is the crucial ingredient."

"We had a string of very strong games that helped Neo-Geo get accepted," Susan Jarocki pointed out. "*Ninja Combat*, which was only our fifth Neo-Geo title, was a winner. *Baseball Stars* and *Sengoku* also did a lot to really put us on the map. These titles were good enough to really compete with kits from other factories in the market at the time. And, we sold them for a fraction of the cost. As we kept coming out with more and more quality games at an affordable price, the industry recognized the value of the system behind it."

Added John Barone: "When SNK received the award from operators for 'most innovative new technology' at the AMOA show, we knew we'd really gotten over the hurdle."

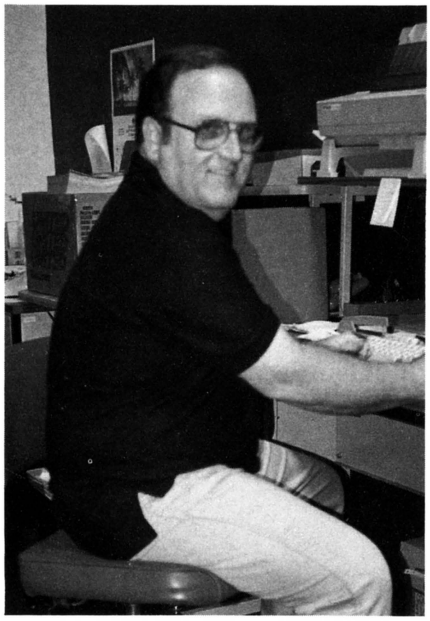
CREATIVE STEPS

What creative steps will SNK take to achieve its daring goal of doubling its sales volume in a single year? The first step has already been taken: last fall, SNK lowered the distributors' cost for Neo-Geo titles. "That surprised a lot of people," smiled John. "Many believe that once SNK established Neo-Geo solidly in the marketplace, we'd raise software prices. When we lowered them instead, nobody knew what to say. By taking that move, we made a clear statement about our intention to support the industry and keep Neo-Geo moving forward."



Eastern Sales rep Jim Chapman

Another creative marketing move could be allowing other video manufacturers to license titles for the Neo-Geo system. Said John: "It's not easy to sell a conventional kit in today's climate against a single megahit like Capcom's *Champion Edition*,



Service chief Tommy Lynn



Latin America sales topper Taro Yamaguchi (right) and assistant Elida Davalos

THE BEST GAMES

TREASURE ISLAND







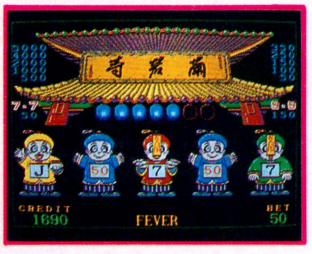
VICTOR 5





CHINA GHOST





POKER CARNIVAL







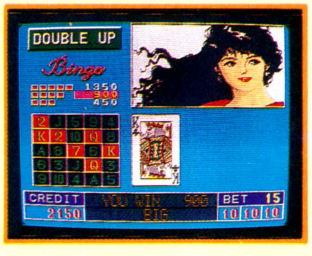
VICTOR 21





VICTOR 7







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or against an economical system with the broad market penetration of Neo-Geo. I believe that's why some major manufacturers are interested in putting their games out as titles for our system." SNK may be ready to announce specific agreements with other factories by this fall's AMOA Expo, Barone added.

Additional new ideas to expand SNK's hardware base on the U.S. market are still under development. SNK is exploring a variety of factory-supplier relationships and arrangements, brainstorming with distribution to rethink and strengthen its role, and test-marketing Neo-Geo cabinets with a "very famous" restaurant chain.

COMMITTED TO COIN-OP

SNK recently moved its coin-op offices from the San Francisco Bay area to Torrance, Calif. (just 20 minutes from Los Angeles International Airport). The new facility, consolidating the separate SNK home and coin-op corporations under a single roof, became operational Feb. 17. With 15,000 sq. ft. of warehouse space (plus loading docks) and 5,000 sq. ft. of offices, the firm's new home is clean, modern and spacious.

"Our chairman has always been committed to coin-op," said John Barone. "True, like everybody else SNK made a lot of money with the Nintendo home system a couple of years ago, but that's basically over. Today we're aware that coin-op product needs to be a half-step ahead of consumer in order to be successful. Arcades and street stops are profit centers that we will keep paying great attention to. We've been coin-op built and remain coin-op driven to this day."

SNK'S COIN-OP TEAM

At the firm's new site is Marty Kitazawa, who is the president of SNK Corp. of America, as well as president of SNK Home Entertainment. Running day-to-day coin-op business is Senior VP John Barone, with Susan Jarocki as product & marketing manager. Susan's assistant, newly promoted to this task on April 1, is Dietra Charles. Taro Yamaguchi heads up Latin American sales, assisted by Elida Davalos. VP of Administration is Taka Ogura, while Tommy Lynn and Tony Archuleta take care of the busy service department.

Some of SNK's most important coin-op staff aren't in Torrance (at least, not yet). National sales manager Tracy Tate is working out of a Bay Area office, but will relocate to the new Torrance facility later this year, probably in July. Working permanently at a regional site is Jim Chapman, who reps SNK for the East Coast from his Chicago office. Remaining in the Bay Area (on a consultation basis) is Neal Zook, who originally helped John Barone design the Neo-Geo system cabinet. These days, Neal oversees Neo-Geo cabinet construction at 3-Koam and lends a hand on special projects when needed.

SNK Corp. of America is located at 20603 Earl St., Torrance, CA 90503. Phone is 310/371-7100. The fax is 210/371-0969.

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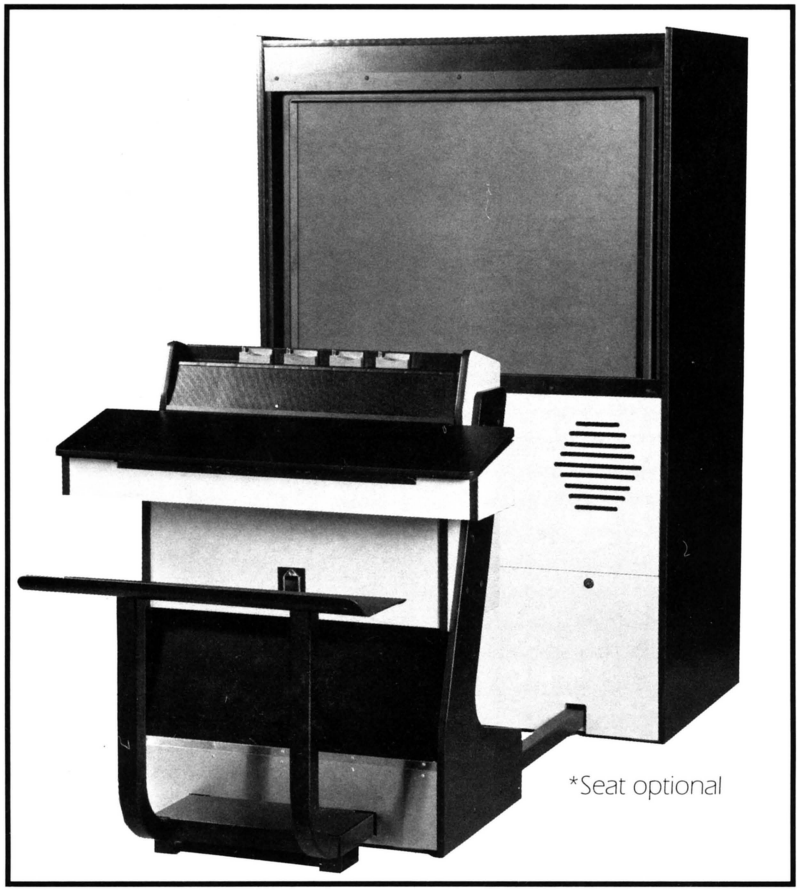

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VALLEY VICTORY

Valley's sixth annual North American Dart Championships determines Team USA; group will represent the U.S. in World Cup Championships in England

From ocean to mountain, hill to Valley: over 100 finalists from Valley's operator-run regional tournaments competed at the company's North American Dart Championships on March 21 at Las Vegas' Sahara Hotel and Casino. The sixth annual Championships drew a select group of darters aiming to claim a spot on Team USA, where they will then go on to represent the States in Valley's international World Cup championship. Slated for Camberley, England Oct. 8-10, the World Cup competition is expected to draw a record number of international teams.

"Bring the Cup home!" Valley Marketing VP Alan Schafer prompted the newly-formed Team USA. Two lucky men and women won themselves a place on the team and will represent the U.S. at the Valley-sponsored soft-tip dart tournament. The championship is the third tier of Valley's tournament program, where operators coordinate regional tournaments on Valley-supplied *Cougar* dart machines. (Valley also supplies a tourney package as well as paid air and hotel fare to Vegas for the North American championships). At least 15,000 darters competed in the 37 regionals throughout the U.S. and finalists from these tourneys numbered 120. When the final darts were thrown in Vegas, Karen Zimmerman of Waukesha, Wisc., Marie McMahon of New Port Richey, Fla., John Gray of Phoenix, Ariz., and Larry Clark of Fond du Lac, Wisc., secured places on Team USA.

The winners have much to smile about as the player field in Las Vegas was highly competitive. Separated into equal singles divisions of men and women, a round-robin format was used in events which included 301 double in/double out, cricket and 501 double out. Division players with the most wins advanced to the championship round.



Alan Schafer (left) awards winners' plaques to Karen Zimmerman and Larry Clark.

And from Las Vegas, it's "Great Britain, here they come!" Team USA will be flown to London this fall for the World Cup championships and treated to guided tours, shopping sprees through Picadilly Circus, Harrods and more. The trip will climax with the championships, where Team USA hopes to win the Cup away from Team Germany.

Valley is excited for the success of the U.S. players, as well. "We have promoted the sport over the past few years in many different forms," said Valley prexy Chuck Milhem, "and the Valley World Cup represents our total commitment, together with that of our master distributor for Europe, NSM/Loewen. We believe the World Cup will become the most sought-after international trophy in the sport of soft-tip darts."

For more information about getting involved in Valley's dart promotions, contact the firm at 517/892-4536.



Team USA is (left to right): Larry Clark, Karen Zimmerman, John Gray and Marie McMahon.



ARACHNID TO NEW JERSEY — The Arachnid BullShooter regional tour headed east to Sommerset, N.J. on April 3-5. With only two months left to qualify for entry to the BullShooter World Challenge of Champions, players came from all over the East Coast to play. Mondial Distributing and CIC Runyon co-sponsored the eight-event regional that saw a slew of excited (and anxious) players. All players receiving first, second and third place position won qualifying certificates to the $50,000 World Challenge of Champions, held May 22-25 in Chicago. Congratulations! Traveling to the Windy City were women's doubles winners Fran Ginder (left) with Arachnid official Ed Mutchler and Fran's partner Maria Fricker.



ARACHNID TO CALIFORNIA — The game of darts sizzled in Long Beach, California April 24-26 when Arachnid's BullShooter tour made its final stop of the season. Red-hot competition came from all over California to compete for darting glory (and for a qualifying position to the BullShooter World Challenge of Champions). C.A. Robinson co-sponsored the California competition. Pictured above are mixed triples winners Fred and Virginia Aguero with Arachnid's Ann Bressler and Aguero partner Craig Belardes.



MERIT TO IOWA — Merit's World Series of Darts visited Des Moines on March 27-29 and, "once again had shooters from all over the U.S. vying for top honors," said the firm. The tournament was a great success thanks to the excited players and the hard work of event co-sponsors, Great American Fun Factory and Nelson Music. Pictured above: women's doubles winners Karen Zimmerman and Laurie Phillippi with Merit's Bob Wiles.



MERIT TO WASHINGTON — Merit concluded its fifth annual World Series of Darts 1991-92 North American Tour in Spokane April 3-5. Over $85,000 in prize money was awarded, "making the 'Northwest Open' the highest-paying regional series in soft-tip history," said the company. Dilley Distributing helped move the event along smoothly and Merit and its regional tournament co-sponsors look forward to the next season. Congratulations to first-place open singles winner Mike Mecham (right) shown with Merit's "tournament guy" Mike Gannon.

TOURNAMENT CALENDAR

JUNE 5-7

VNEA 2nd annual Nat'l Juniors Championship, Kahler Hotel, Rochester, Minn. VNEA members age 9-20 only. For info, call Gregg Elliott at 517/893-1800.

JUNE 30-JULY 6

Shuffleboard Fed. Grand Slam Tour Board Talk Tournament (sponsored by Dynamo), Holiday Inn, King of Prussia, Penn. For more info, call 313/380-9300.

JULY 3-6

Tornado's Nat'l Championships, Oklahoma City. For site info, call 817/483-8199.

AUG. 31-SEPT. 8

Shuffleboard Fed. Grand Slam Tour U.S. Open, (sponsored by Dynamo), Howard Johnson South Plaza, Austin, Texas. For more info, call 313/380-9300.

SEPTEMBER 2-7

Tornado Table Soccer $100,000 World Championships, Dallas/Ft. Worth Airport Hilton. For more information, call Steve Murray at 817/483-8199.

NOVEMBER 9-15

Shuffleboard Federation's North American Championships, (sponsored by Dynamo), Sands Regency Hotel & Casino, Reno, Nev. For info, call 313/380-9300.

NOVEMBER 12-15

Pinball Expo and Flip Out Tournament, Ramada Inn O'Hare, Rosemont, Ill. For more information, call 800/323-3547.

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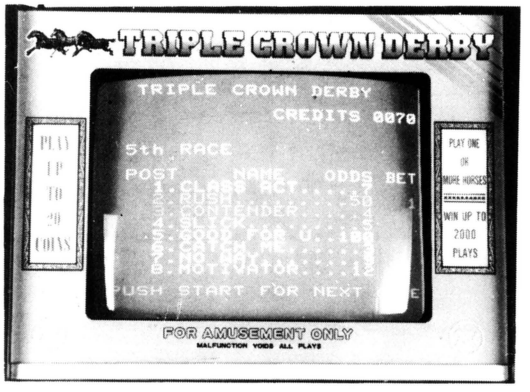

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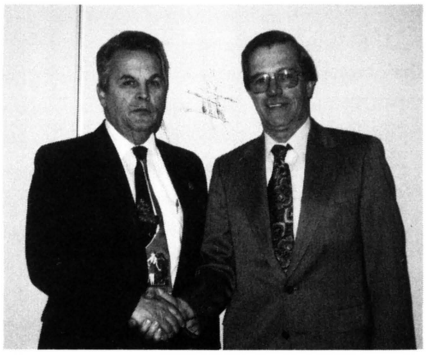
NORTHERN EXPOSURE

Minnesota operators combine lobbying & annual operator convention; well-run reception for state lawmakers features games & charity

Those Minnesota operators are a smart, professional bunch. While other trade groups were scratching their heads, wondering how to boost attendance at political lobbying events, MOMA (the Minnesota Operators of Music & Amusement) went ahead and pulled in operators and distributors from all over the state to St. Paul for their recent political "Day on the Hill." How did they do it? By combining the yearly lobbying affair with MOMA's annual convention!



State Senate majority leader Roger Moe, addresses the MOMA lobbying group.

It was the first time both events were held in tandem. The two-day conference stressed politics on day one, in-house association business on day two. Planning and coordination were handled by MOMA Exec Director Hy Sandler, with invaluable assistance from Linda Winstead. Nice going (as usual), Hy and Linda.

Politics means video lottery for most operator associations these days, and MOMA is no exception.



The AMOA 5 from Minnesota+1 — Norm Pink, Tami Norberg-Paulsen, Gene Urso, Gene Winstead and Dick Hawkins. Urso is current AMOA prexy; Pink and Hawkins are past presidents; Norberg-Paulsen and Winstead are current officers; behind the camera is former board member Hy Sandler.



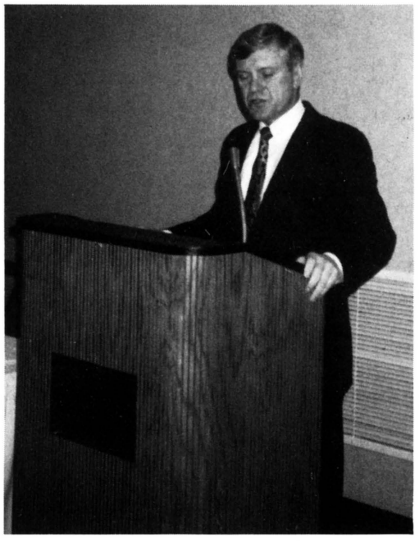
Robert Knotek leads an educational seminar at the convention.



MOMA members gather for breakfast and the "Day on the Hill' briefing.

For several years, the state enjoyed a regulated amusement-only poker market. However, this expired a while back and was not renewed by the legislature. Meantime, MOMA has spent a couple of years trying valiantly to emulate Montana and South Dakota in achieving state-regulated, operator-run, pay-for-play video poker. They've had a rough time of it, especially being one of the first states to experience heavy competition from casinos on Indian reservations (not to mention counter-lobbying efforts from well-financed reservation spokesmen).

MOMA's Day on the Hill began with breakfast briefings by MOMA's lobbyists, its PR expert, and finally its legislative committee chair Gene Winstead. Senate majority leader Roger Moe and Senate finance committee chairman Doug Johnson also addressed the group (talk about heavy hitters!). After that, attendees went "on the hill" to meet individually with their respective legislators. MOMA folks also attended committee hearings and were able to view the House and Senate in session from the galleries of each body.



AMOA President Gene Urso congratulates then-MOMA President Roger Rasmussen on a terrific convention and lobbying event.

The day ended with a festive MOMA reception for lawmakers and their families and staff. Hanson Distributing and Lieberman Music underwrote the event, which featured charity fundraising contests on displayed equipment. Jerry Borth (Brothers Music & Games) and Brent McKennon (American Amusement Arcades) supervised the contests. (By the way, is MOMA the only state to emulate AMOA's national level Congressional reception in this fashion? Other associations would do well to follow suit!)

Day two was devoted to internal coin-op business and pleasure. MOMA reelected current officers to a new term; named some new board members; and heard some excellent management seminars (recession survival; gambling enforcement). The group also enjoyed a luncheon chat from AMOA prexy Gene Urso and, that night, took in a dinner theater production of the hit show "Forever Plaid" (at the Hey City Cafe, across the river in Minneapolis). "The evening met with rave reviews!" said Hy Sandler.

As reported in this month's *News Digest* subsequent to its annual meeting, MOMA named Dan Galvin as the new president in the wake of Roger Rasmussen's resignation. (Roger had sold his business interests and was moving out of state.) MOMA has also named former Lieberman Music management pro Mike Anderson as "independent consultant" for a new membership drive and to coordinate the MOMA lobbying program.

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HOOK

Legal Questions

by Laurence Merritt and David Hagen

Protect Your Business Name

How valuable is the name of your business? If you had to change the name of your business today, would it substantially affect the operation of your business and cut into profits? Many business owners have invested heavily in promoting the name of their business. If this is the case, what steps have you taken to protect your investment?

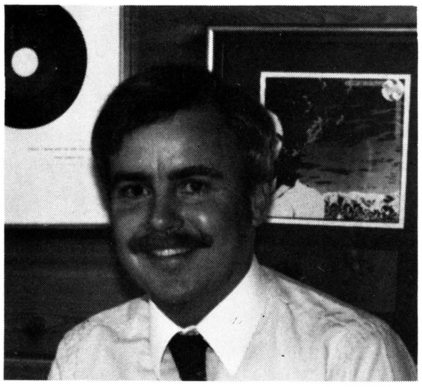
If you feel that the name of your business has any value at all, it would be wise to understand the basic legal protection available under trademark law.

A trademark is a brand name, logo, or other commercial symbol used to identify services or products. Trademarks identify products and are used on the goods or on their packaging. Service marks, a type of trademark, identify services and are used on signs, advertising and promotional material.

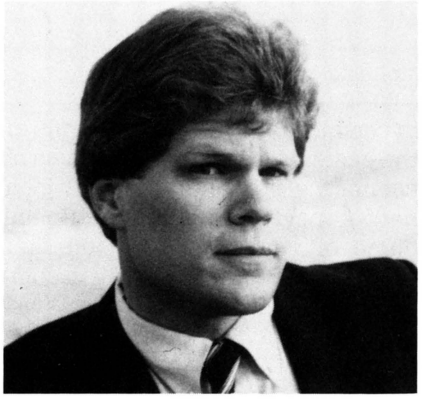
COMMON LAW RIGHTS

In the United States, the right to trademarks and service marks are initially obtained by using the mark in business, not by registration alone. Generally, the first person to use a mark in a particular geographic region develops rights to the mark even if it is not registered. These rights are called common law rights in that they developed over time under the old English common law. Generally, the first user of the mark has rights against all others who later begin using that mark (or a substantially similar mark), in the same geographic region.

Enforcement of these common law rights usually occurs in the state courts and you must be prepared to prove when the mark was first used and that the infringer's mark causes confusion in the marketplace. Proving these facts can sometimes be difficult. Proving when you first started using the mark, especially if it is several years after the fact, can be very difficult. In addition, you will need to go to the state court where the infringer is located. Sometimes this can work against you in that the local infringer may benefit from "hometown justice."



LARRY MERRITT



DAVID HAGEN

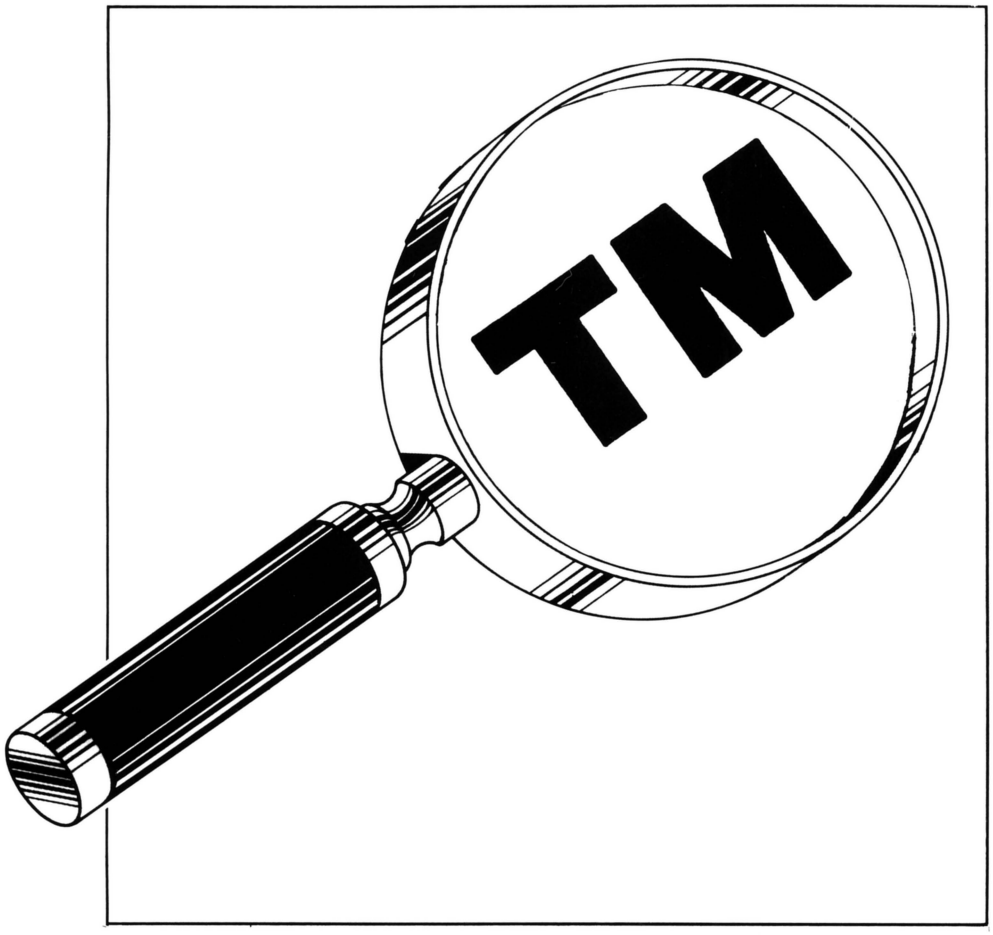
Laurence Merritt has been helping operators with their legal problems for almost 20 years, taking many matters to trial and obtaining large judgments. However, he feels his greatest accomplishments are the times when he has been able to obtain successful results without going to trial. Mr. Merritt is 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 questions. 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.

FEDERAL TRADEMARK REGISTRATION

Federal law permits the owner of a trademark or service mark that is used in interstate or international commerce to register a trademark. The process of registering a trademark involves searching for other possible users of the same or similar mark, preparing an application, filing it with the Patent and Trademark office, publication of the proposed registration, and a time period for others to oppose the registration. For many operators, this may involve too much time and money. However, the whole process can cost less than $2,000 (including attorney's fees). If the name of your business has acquired a certain amount of public visibility, it might be worth your while to protect your name in this manner.

Registering a mark under federal law has several benefits. First, if litigation ensues, there will be a presumption that you are the legal owner of the mark. That presumption, of course, can be defeated if an infringing party proves that they actually used the mark first in a particular geographic region. Second, registering the mark makes it more visible. Once your mark is listed, it will discourage others to potentially infringe on your mark. Third, if your mark is registered for five



years and you continually use it for that period of time, claims of persons who claim a prior use may be cut off. Fourth, the statute provides that the prevailing party can recover attorney's fees and damages should there be litigation. Fifth, any litigation can be commenced in the federal court. This may help avoid the "hometown justice" problem discussed above.

WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS NAME

Now that we have some idea what types of protection are available, what different steps are available to protect the name of your business? First, whenever you commence a business, figure out a way to establish your use of that name in commerce. Simply getting a corporation with that trade name does not necessarily guarantee you any rights or establish the fact that you were using the name in commerce. Similarly, a fictitious business name statement does not conclusively prove that you were using that name in commerce either. Perhaps one of the easiest ways to establish use in commerce is to place an ad in a newspaper. The ad will contain the name of your business, the fact that you are using the name in commerce, and the date (on the newspaper) on which the name was being used. An ad is a cheap insurance policy to prove first use in the event you ever need to litigate the issue.

Second, you may wish to hire a search firm to determine whether anyone has previously attempted to register your name with the Patent and Trademark Office. An intellectual property attorney (one who practices in the area of copyrights, trademark or patents) will be able to give you the name of a reputable local research firm. Many times, they can also check local fictitious business name filings as well as the Federal Patent and Copyright Office. The cost for this service is usually not much more than a couple of hundred dollars. Once again, this may be a cheap insurance if you anticipate the name of your business having significant value in the future.

Third, you can place the letters "TM" after the name of your business. This will let others know that you are claiming some rights, whether they be common law or federal rights, in that particular trade name. The use of this does not necessarily confer any special rights, however, it acts like a "beware of dog" sign in that will warn potential infringers.

Fourth, if you feel that your trade name is truly significant, federal registration of the name should be considered. Consult with a local attorney who specializes in intellectual property matters. This attorney will be able to explain to you the registration process and get you through it with a relatively minimal amount of hassle.

Certain types of trade names are not protected under the federal law. For example, if the trade name is simply descriptive of the product or is merely a geographic designation (such as Los Angeles Vending), it may not be protectable. Otherwise, this would allow the first individual to register to tie up a significant amount of trade names. Again, if you have any concern about whether your name is merely descriptive, you should consult with an intellectual property attorney.

For many operators, especially those with smaller routes, the name of your business is not significant. Your routes will continue to deal with you whether the name of your business is "Banana Vending" or "Xylophone Vending." However, once the business starts to grow, it will develop a life of its own. As you work on things such as prompt service and quality, your business will become known for these characteristics. It is at this time when the name of your business will truly begin to pay dividends. However, if you have not taken the preliminary steps to protect that name when the business was commenced, all that good will could be lost.

The authors would like to express their appreciation to David Gurnick of Kindel & Anderson in Los Angeles, for help in the preparation of this column.



INFORMATION ON COUNTERFEIT AND PARALLEL VIDEO GAME BOARDS

COUNTERFEITS

The success of Street Fighter II Champion Edition has sent counterfeiters scurrying to make an easy profit using Capcom's proprietary copyrighted and trademarked material and manufacturing, selling or operating counterfeit versions of our game. Counterfeit in this case means any Street Fighter II Champion Edition PC boards, parts of PC boards, chips, graphics or other items containing our proprietary material that did not originate from Capcom.

Facts:

- Counterfeits are illegal. Illegal to make, illegal to sell, illegal to operate. Counterfeiting hurts our entire industry. It stifles the research and development necessary to produce top quality products.
- Counterfeits are of inferior quality and come with no warranty.
- A legitimate software conversion for the CPS system for Street Fighter II Champion Edition is not available.
- If someone offers you a deal "too good to be true" on a Street Fighter II Champion Edition, it probably is.
- Involvement in counterfeiting can subject you to criminal prosecution and civil damages — Capcom is serious about this and so are people like the FBI and U.S. Customs.

You might be tempted to get into counterfeits because they're cheap. In reality, they're only cheap on quality. When you add it all up, they are prohibitively expensive.

PARALLELS

Legitimate Capcom PC boards originally distributed outside North American markets that are subsequently imported into North America are often called "parallels."

Facts:

- No manufacturer is presently contesting the legality of selling or operating parallels at the present time.
- You cannot buy legitimate graphics and put them on a parallel game. You cannot copy Capcom graphics. Both are illegal.
- Neither Capcom nor its authorized distributors offer service or parts for parallels.

We hope this information helps you make the right choice. For further information contact your authorized Capcom distributor or the AAMA. Counterfeits and parallels — you decide. Is it worth it?

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★ 2. ***SAVE THE BEST FOR LAST,*** *Vanessa Williams, Mercury 856136*
3. ***VIVA LAS VEGAS,*** *ZZ Top, Warner Bros. 18979*
4. ***TEARS IN HEAVEN,*** *Eric Clapton, Reprise 19038*
5. ***JUST TAKE MY HEART,*** *Mr. Big, Atlantic 87509*
6. ***BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY,*** *Queen, Hollywood 64794*
★ 7. ***MAKE IT HAPPEN,*** *Mariah Carey, Columbia 74239*
8. ***EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU,*** *Ugly Kid Joe, Mercury 866632*
9. ***HUMAN TOUCH,*** *Bruce Springsteen, Columbia 74273*
10. ***HOLD ON MY HEART,*** *Genesis, Atlantic 87481*

POP PICK HITS

I'LL BE THERE
Mariah Carey - Columbia 74330

YOU WON'T SEE ME CRY
Wilson Phillips - Capitol 57743

DO IT TO ME
Lionel Richie - Motown 2160

BABY GOT BACK
Sir Mix-A-Lot - Warner Bros. 18947

SLOW MOTION
Color Me Badd - Giant 18908

CW

★ 1. ***ACHY BREAKY HEART,*** *Billy Ray Cyrus, Mercury 866522*
2. ***PAPA LOVED MAMA,*** *Garth Brooks, Liberty 57734*
3. ***EVERY SECOND*** *Collin Raye, Epic 74242*
4. ***OLD FLAMES HAVE NEW NAMES,*** *Mark Chesnutt, MCA 54334*
5. ***NOTHING SHORT OF DYING,*** *Travis Tritt, Warner Bros. 18984*
6. ***MIDNIGHT IN MONTGOMERY,*** *Alan Jackson, Arista 2418*
7. ***THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' WRONG W/RADIO,*** *Aaron Tippin, RCA 62181*
8. ***BACKROADS,*** *Ricky Van Shelton, Columbia 74258*
9. ***BURN ME DOWN,*** *Marty Stuart, MCA 54253*
10. ***NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT IN GEORGIA,*** *R. McEntire, MCA Cut*

COUNTRY PICK HITS

FROM THE WORD LOVE
Ricky Skaggs - Epic 74311

HEART YOU OWN
Dwight Yoakam - Warner Bros. 18966

I SAW THE LIGHT
Wynonna - MCA 54407

WHAT KIND OF FOOL...
Lee Roy Parnell - Arista cut

SOMETHING IN RED
Lorrie Morgan - RCA 62219

R&B

★ 1. ***MY LOVIN' (YOU'RE NEVER...),*** *En Vogue, Atco 98586*
★ 2. ***COME AND TALK TO ME,*** *Jodeci, MCA 54175*
★ 3. ***JUMP,*** *Kris Kross, Columbia 74197*
★ 4. ***WE GOT A LOVE THANG,*** *CeCe Peniston, A&M 1594*
★ 5. ***PLEASE DON'T GO,*** *Boyz II Men, Motown 2155*
6. ***WHEN YOU'VE BEEN BLESSED,*** *Patti LaBelle, MCA 54376*
★ 7. ***IN THE CLOSET,*** *Michael Jackson, Epic 74266*
★ 8. ***THINKIN' BACK,*** *Color Me Badd, Reprise 19074*
9. ***DO NOT PASS ME BY,*** *Hammer, Capitol 44797*
10. ***I'M CRYIN',*** *Shanice, Motown 2153*

R&B PICK HITS

BLUES COME OVER ME
B.B. King - MCA 54339

DO IT TO ME
Lionel Richie - Motown 2160

BABY GOT BACK
Sir Mix-A-Lot - Warner 18947

TEDDY'S JAM II
Guy - MCA 54383

SLOW MOTION
Color Me Badd - Giant 18908

CDs

1. ***ADRENALIZE,*** *Def Leppard, Mercury 12185*
2. ***CLASSIC QUEEN,*** *Queen, Hollywood/Elektra 61311*
3. ***ACHTUNG BABY,*** *U2, Island 10347*
4. ***ROPIN' THE WIND,*** *Garth Brooks, Liberty 96330*
5. ***GREATEST HITS,*** *ZZ Top, Warner Bros. 26846*
6. ***HUMAN TOUCH,*** *Bruce Springsteen, Columbia 53000*
7. ***TOTALLY KROSSED OUT,*** *Kris Kross, Columbia 48710*
8. ***WYNONNA,*** *Wynonna, Curb 10529*
9. ***BLOOD SUGAR SEX MAGIK,*** *Red Hot Chili Peppers, Warner 26681*
10. ***WE CAN'T DANCE,*** *Genesis, Atlantic 82344*

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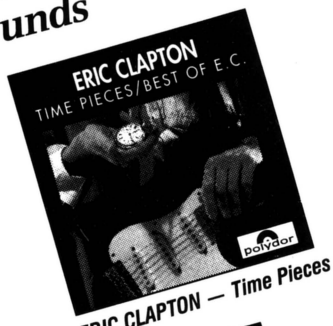
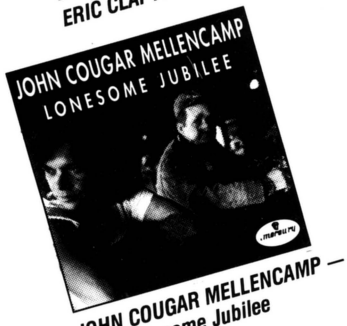


ERIC CLAPTON — Time Pieces



JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP — Lonesome Jubilee

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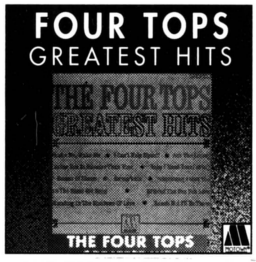
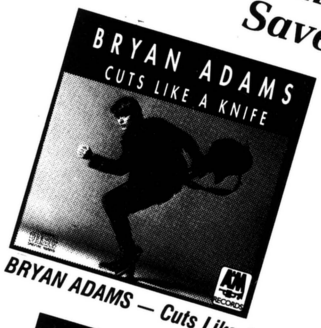


FOUR TOPS — Greatest Hits

Sound Savers



BRYAN ADAMS — Cuts Like A Knife



SUPREMES — Greatest Hits

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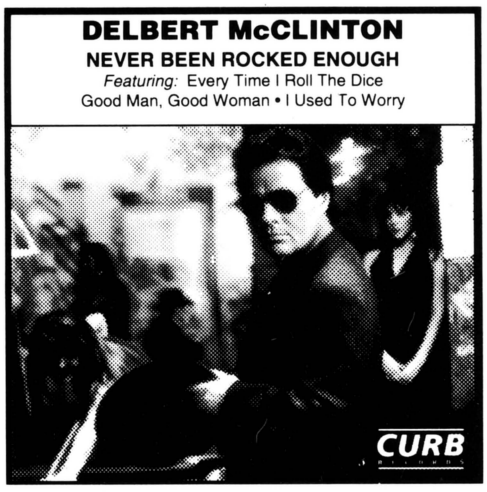

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Thumbnail Sketch

Bob "Cork" Corcoran

Taking matters into his own hands, that's what Bob "Cork" Corcoran did when he began his coinbiz career in 1974. As a bar owner, he became frustrated with the operator in charge of his location. "I wanted to be in charge of my own service and what games went into my bar," he said. "So, I began Cork's Amusements to provide better service to others like me." And so Cork's Amusements in Philip, South Dakota was born.

Cork still has his hand in the bar business, with his bar, Sundowners, but much of his time is spent running his route. Cork's Amusements is a one-man (and one-woman) operation with Cork performing all the service, game buying, etc. and wife Benita doing the bookkeeping. Not one to take all the credit, he also attributes job success to his children, Jay, 6 and Sean, 8 who tell him which games are hot. "They know what's good," he laughed. "Whatever they like to play ends up being exactly what my players want."

Self-admittedly a small operator, Cork outfits his 25-30 locations with 300 machines. He runs most types of equipment (but he's not into redemption yet and has no cigarette venders). "I know redemption is a hot earner," he said. "And when I get a little more time on my hands, that's something I'm going to pursue."

One thing he has had time to pursue is video lottery. South Dakota is one of the few states where VLT is legal and operator-run . . . and Cork says he has 20 of the machines. "Ironically," he offered, "while they are *the* item to have, they have caused videos to decrease, and business hasn't risen as much as I'd thought. Don't get me wrong," he said. "VLTs do great, but it's pretty frustrating that the state runs away with 35% off the top, while the operator has to deal with the overhead and maintenance costs. I've also recently changed my location split to 60-40 in their favor. You can't afford to be without the VLTs, but it's opened up a bunch of extra problems.

"And yes," he continued, "amusement video earnings have dropped. Parents spend most of their money on the VLTs and don't have enough to give their kids for the other games," he half-joked.

Cork continues to run amusement videos, however, and he's excited about the new *Street Fighter II Champion Edition,* as well as the *Neo-Geo* system



Bob "Cork" Corcoran and his wife Benita.

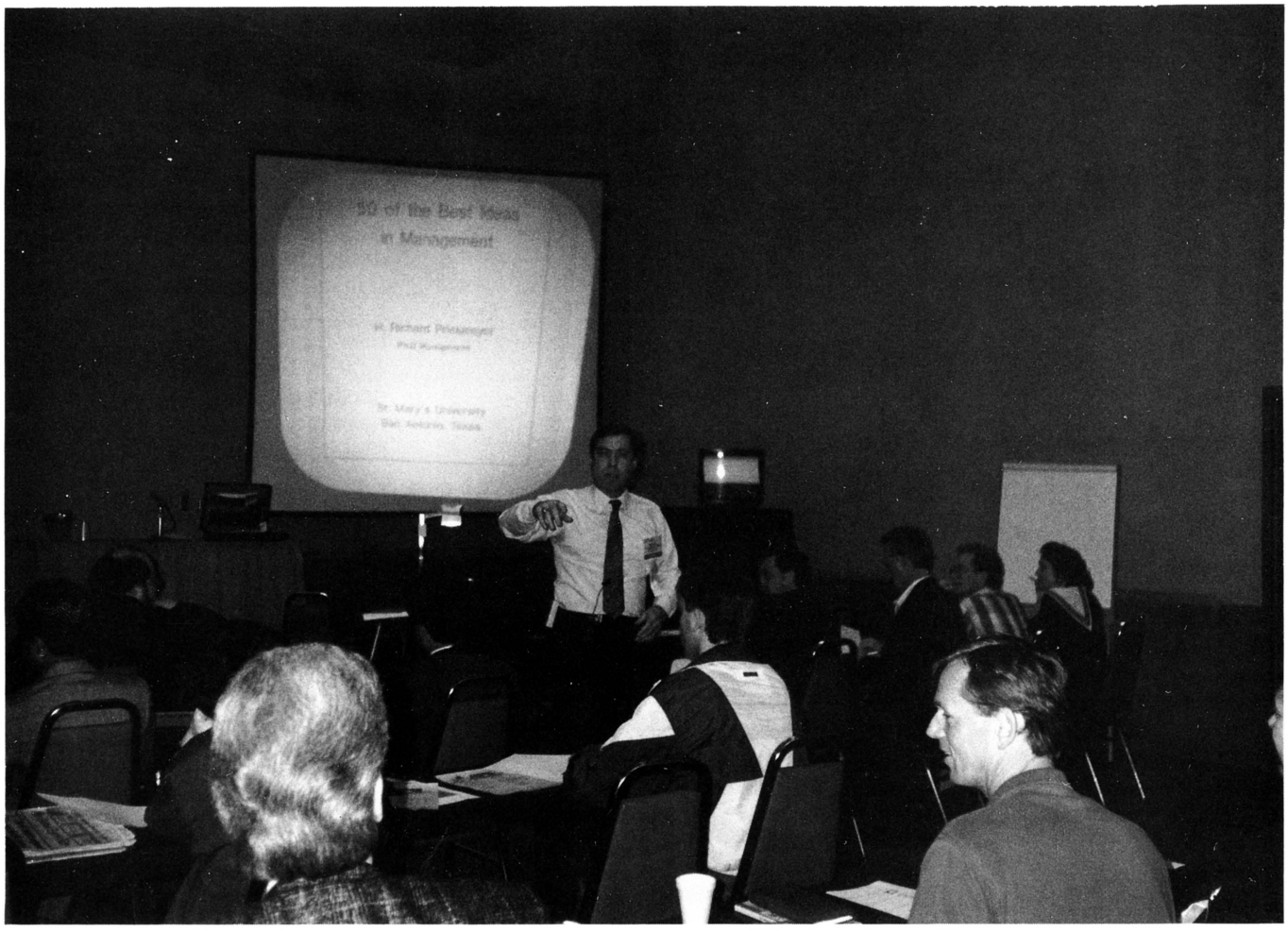
titles. "Kits are a great thing," he said. "They stretch out an old game's life and have the power to make it like new." Surprisingly enough, though, old games do well for Cork. "If I put a new video next to an old game, it will earn better for a while, and then my older games pick up again. I think it has something to do with the fact that people grew up playing these games and still have a fondness for them."

All things considered, jukeboxes have become the least popular item in his inventory. "I've significantly scaled down the jukebox end of my business," he admitted. "Licensing has become a pain, and the revenues from the machine don't warrant a heavy inventory. Of course, the staples do well. They always have, always will. But running jukeboxes with the licensing is more bother than it's worth for me."

Cork does seem to have a pretty good feel for what works for him and what doesn't. But he keeps his eyes peeled for other possibilities. "Something I'm sure you've all heard," he related, "but which bears repeating, is that reading trade magazines and going to the shows are invaluable tools in helping the operator deciding what to buy, and where the trends are." He laughed, "Of course, I'm lucky enough to have my own in-house experts [sons Jay and Sean], but it pays to stay on top of things."

Cork offers some more advice. "I'm glad I got mad enough to start my own business," he acknowledged, "but these days, if you want to start a business, you must have cash up front. Don't borrow. Also you must have a business background. Don't just rush in because it sounds good. I'd start working for someone in the industry to get the knowledge and background, then start my own company."

Meantime, Cork remains living proof that coin-op and taverns are a great marriage. "This is, and has been a promising industry," he said. "I'm 57 years old and I don't plan retirement for a long, long time."



BRINGING ORDER OUT OF "CHAOS"

Priesmeyer shares thoughtful management concepts

If you really wanted to see and hear something completely different at the recent ACME show, you should have attended the two management seminars conducted by Ph.D. Richard Priesmeyer. Talking rapidly while firing strange symbols onto a huge slide screen every minute or so, Priesmeyer pounded out such marketing theories as the CHAOS concept and surely some of the operators in the decently-attended audience had some "chaos" in their own heads at the conclusion.

But many if not most came away with ideas on how to improve their businesses back home. Admitting that the CHAOS theory has little application to the coin amusement industry, Priesmeyer charged on anyway. "It's like getting an EKG measurement on a game like, for example, *Street Fighter,*" he said. The notion is to determine whether this or any new game adds to the location's overall income or merely "splits the quarter."

"All CHAOS theories are based on change," he stated. "Even the slightest change in a troubled business can keep the ship afloat if done in time." He gave no examples we recall but did warn operators to think ahead and avoid last minute reactions to problems that can cost. This applies to early game rotations, early equipment sell-offs, early buying of pending new hits, etc.

"CHAOS says the performance of a location is not a 'random' thing but can actually be controlled by the operator," Priesmeyer declared. "The game's collection performance is largely in your control. You know, even cleaning the glass or putting a certain game into another spot in the location can make a big change in income. Of course, changing the difficulty level or unplugging a jammed coin mech is obviously a controlling change, but remember that sometimes the play doesn't come back up," he warned.

He asked operators to gauge the dynamics of gameplay at their locations. If it's helter, skelter, try to do something about it. "Winning a game can make the player stay in the store but losing can push him out," he said. He also advised that the physical layout and appearance of the location itself affects the amount of play and the type of clientele that goes in and out.

MANAGEMENT IDEAS

Besides CHAOS, Priesmeyer shared quite a number of other



ideas which affect the coin amusement operator. For example, if you are looking to improve on your employees' productivity, you not only should provide an attractive workplace for them but make them feel appreciated (e.g. that pat on the back for a job well done, as well as a more reasonable rather than caustic approach toward the hired help can do wonders.)

Priesmeyer also asked operators to "take an inventory of your whole company . . . the condition of the vehicles, the morale of the employees, the job environment . . . even the nature of the forms the routemen and others have to fill out. Don't just be careful about the equipment you buy," he warned, "but about the totality of the company if you consider yourself a good manager."

Next he asked operators to take another inventory, this of their "outside opportunities." For instance, list your strengths (e.g. maybe you have got great music programmers) and capitalize on them. Then list your weaknesses (maybe you don't have an employee who's knowledgeable about darts and leagues and cure that by sending him or her to one of the manufacturers' how-to sessions).

On the subject of competition, Priesmeyer listed three key ways to make your points against other operators in the territory, warning (for reasons we don't understand) "you can only pick one." They are:

1. Be "different" from the competition (as in offering better equipment and speedier service).
2. Offer a "lower cost" (not very applicable in the route business, considering the desire to increase the playing price and/or lower the location's share). But it could mean discounting tokens at arcades.
3. "Focus" upon a select target audience (perhaps like jukebox locations) and give that your all. "Hey, if the location needs you at 6:30 in the morning, have your man there at 6:30 in the morning," Priesmeyer declared. "Dig into your customer's head to see what else you can do for him," he added.

GROWING THE BIZ

Priesmeyer listed ways to expand your business. Growing "horizontally" to operators means adding more of the same type of locations. An example of growing "vertically" would be an operator who gets into distributing or a distributor who gets into operating. "Few companies in the coin-op business are vertically integrated," Priesmeyer observed.

Now, growing "circularly" is like an arcade operator getting into a related but different situation like street operating, or obviously in the case of a street route owner, him starting up an arcade. "You have the same trucks to move the equipment in and out and the same basic mechanics to pull service," Priesmeyer stated.

Other thoughts included the "Span of Management", referring to the number of people one route foreman can effectively handle. "A little training can increase his span from, say, supervising the work of seven to supervising ten. Some people, however, can only handle a few," he said.

Finally, he warned about the "case of two managers" which happens when one employee has influence over others who should take their orders from a different manager. "You can't have crossed signals when it comes to who gives directions," Priesmeyer stated.

Much of the two lectures was heady stuff, but a lot should have been learned. Ideas cause change and since everyone could always improve his management techniques, these two ACME sessions were worthwhile.

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NEW PRODUCTS



SUPER MARIO BROS. from Gottlieb/Premier

Super Mario Bros. is a pingame based on the crazy antics of Nintendo characters Mario and Luigi.

Theme: Fantasy adventure.

Gameplay: Players "join" the super duo while they travel through seven worlds to rescue the Princess from the castle holding her captive.

Features: Video mode on full-size dot matrix display, power sound system. Playfield features include spectacular light show, and chance for player to shoot Yoshi's ramp for the "quick shot" and the cave for "hidden treasures".

For more information, contact your authorized distributor or for referral, it's Gottlieb/Premier, 759 Industrial Dr., Bensenville, IL 60106; 708/350-0400.



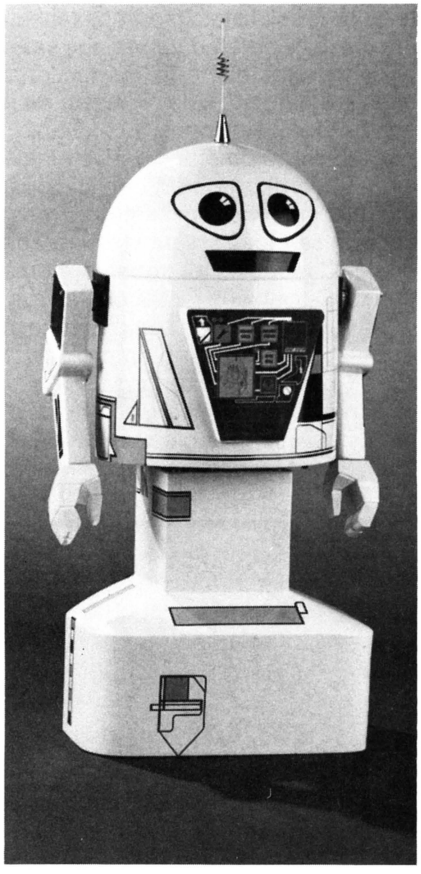
BUDDY BEAR from Smart Industries

Smart's **Buddy Bear** is a kiddie ball-toss with ticket dispenser.

Gameplay: Player plays "toss" with Buddy in his forest playground, by throwing ball into his catcher's glove.

Features: Mouth/Voice interaction sound system, life-like bear movements, ticket dispenser, double-coin mech with locking cash box, a credit/timer digital readout and a top net.

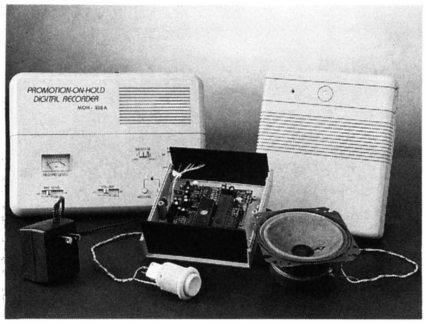
For more information, contact your authorized distributor, or for referral it's Smart Industries, 1626 Delaware Ave., Des Moines, IA 50317; 515/265-9900.



New from Promotional Technologies

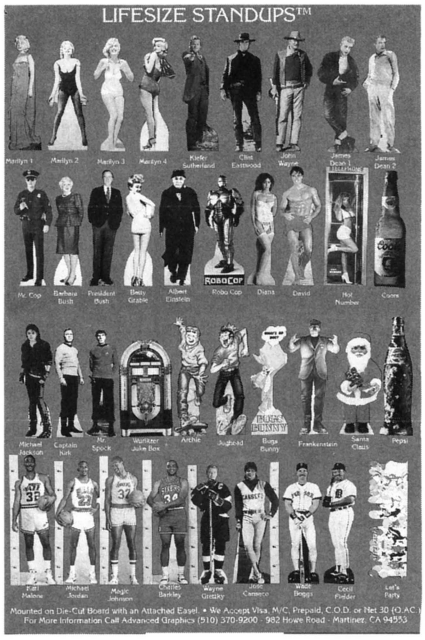
Promotional Technologies introduces the **Promobot** line of stock and custom animated figures. Preprogrammed or remote-controlled, the figures move at the waist and arms. They also have a lighted speech display. Constructed of aluminum parts and a fiberglass body, the high profile characters can be "dressed" to fit any situation or custom-produced. Designed as point of purchase displays, traffic-stoppers, event announcers, etc., the *Promobots* can be rented, leased or purchased.

The company has also released a family of low-cost, high-quality digital audio products, designed to replace costly, high-maintenance tape sys-



tems. The solid-state message repeaters can be operated for various safety, entertainment and instructional uses (reminding kids to wear their seatbelts in kiddie rides, for example). Available equipment includes single circuit boards for OEM applications, modular push-button or infrared message on cartridge systems, "message on hold" modules for phone systems and multi-message rack-mounted systems. Also offered is a complete line of accessories, including amps, power supplys, cables and boards.

For more information, contact Promotional Technologies, 3643 N.E. 25th St. #4, Ocala, FL 32670; 800/765-7626.



New Lifesize Standups from Advanced Graphics

Advanced Graphics has added additional lifesize standups to its already extensive collection. Now available are comic characters Archie and Jughead, as well as James Dean (as portrayed in *Rebel Without A Cause)* and Portland Trailblazer Clyde Drexler. The company has over 50 lifesize figures available and all are mounted on die-cut board with attached easel. Advanced Graphics also manufactures tabletop figures.

For more information, contact Advanced Graphics, 982 Howe Rd., Martinez, CA 94553; 510/370-9200.

AIR DARTS from Sarbacan

Sarbacan **Air Darts** is a precision fiberglass air gun developed to shoot (via the player's breath blast) lightweight soft-tip darts. A plastic protective tip and a special mouthpiece over the 20-inch blow gun barrel prevents inhalation of the dart. All parts are easily replaceable, including the mouthpiece (allowing several players to use one). Each air dart kit comes with one air gun and three specially-rifled aluminum Magnum air darts. Options include a plastic or wood dart carrying case, front and back hand-grips and break-downs.

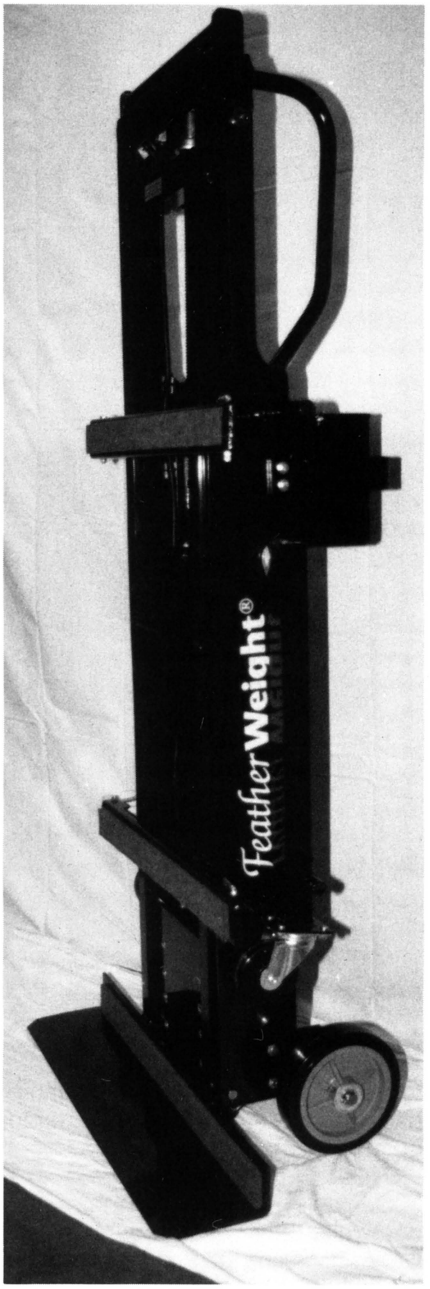
Also available from the company are the **Baby Bee** and **Little Hummer** lightweight darts. The *Baby Bee* is a mini-dart which uses a 2BA soft-dart tip. Its solid brass barrels are self-centering and easy-loading. The *Little Hummer* is larger than the *Baby Bee* but still lightweight and may be converted from hand-thrown status to air gun-fireable. Both dart sets come with a pocket-sized wood carrying case.

For more info, contact Sarbacan, 10805 N.E. 183rd, Battleground, WA 98604; 206/687-5366.

New CD Compilations from Salsoul Records

Salsoul Records is celebrating its 20th year in the music business with the release of several dance music CD compilations. **The Original Salsoul Classics** features songs from artists Skyy, Loleatta Holloway and The Salsoul Orchestra. Other CDs to follow include Salsoul's **Anthology Series** (highlighting Salsoul's most popular artists over the years) and the **Master Series,** a compilation of rare and unreleased recordings from the label's premiere artists. Artists on both CDs include Joe Bataan, Carol Williams and Inner Life. The company also has plans to release a special Christmas compilation.

For information on these and additional CD and LP titles, contact Salsoul's distributing company, Bethlehem Music Co., 16 E. 40th St., New York, NY 10016; 212/889-0044.



FEATHER WEIGHT from Woodward Mfg. Sales

The **Feather Weight** is an electric lift truck using a battery-powered electric motor on a hardened drive screw. The unit is lighter than other lift trucks and can lift loads up and down stairs, on and off docks, or in and out of a truck bed. Powered by the specially-designed "Quantum System 24" (a

3/4 horse motor which runs quieter and cooler than other motors, as well as draws less power from its battery source), the *Feather Weight* gives four to five times as many lifts per battery charge as other models.

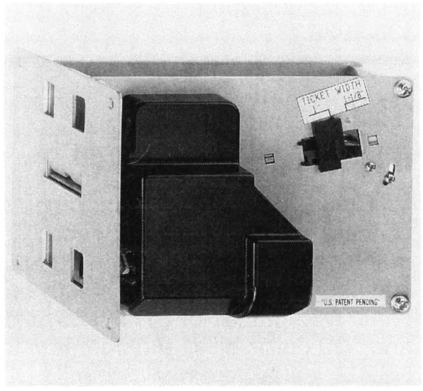
Other features include an electromagnetic breaking system and extension handles; optional features are wheel brakes and built-in tripod (to quickly convert the unit to a four-wheel machine). Best of all, the piece allows a properly trained person to easily and safely load and unload bulky, heavy (up to 1,200 lbs.) objects and allows maneuverability in tight spaces.

For more info, contact Woodward Manufacturing Sales, Inc., P.O. Box 217, Oostburg, WI 53070; 800/558-3536 or 414/564-2323.

TIC BOARD from Vicco Electronics

The **Tic Board** is a ticket interface computer able to transform any JAMMA-compatible video game into a ticket redemption piece. Easy to install, the board can be used with any ticket or card dispenser for four different "ticket levels" (allowing 0-15 tickets per level). Programmed by dip switches and eproms, the *Tic Board* is not based on game time, and one board is required for each player.

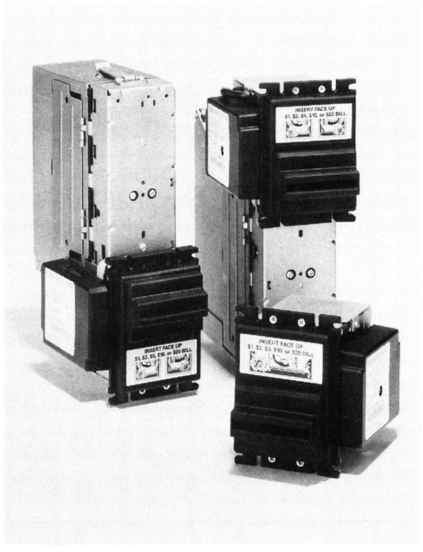
For more information, contact Vicco Electronics, P.O. Box 1019, Cathedral City, CA 92234; 619/322-4000.



CDT10 from Coin Controls

The **CDT10** is a dual-mode ticket dispenser available now from Coin Controls. Incorporating a number of features to prevent and reduce jamming, the unit utilizes a plastic cover over the optic sensor to block against debris, a lock-down bar for reliable ticket feed and a free-flow ticket channel allowing for easy clearing of jammed tickets. The dual-mode design dispenses tickets with either a single pulse or continuous mode and contains a micro switch shut-off for when the last ticket is dispensed. Other key features include an anti-vandalism design, ticket width selector, automatic ticket embossing and ticket feeder button. The CDT10 model is compatible with most ticket dispensers.

For more information, contact Coin Controls, Inc., 1850 Howard St., Elk Grove Village, IL 60007; 708/228-1810.

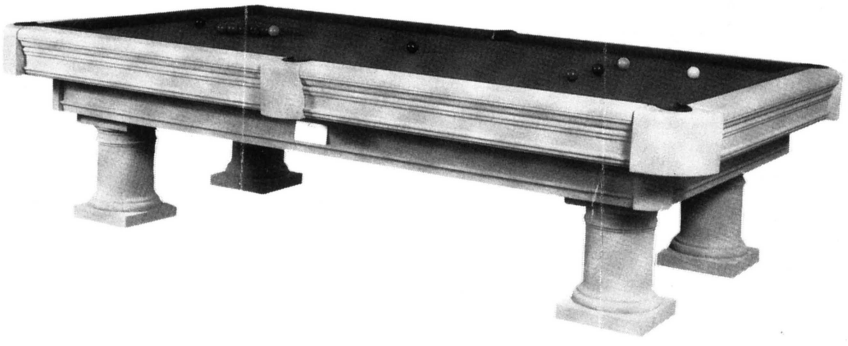


New Bill Acceptors from Mars

Two new bill acceptors are on the market from Mars Electronics. Debuted at ACME, the **GL5** is an acceptor designed specifically for gaming and lottery functions. Multiple sensors allow it to examine a large portion of the bill in great detail, resulting in more accurate bill acceptance and tighter security. Security is also made easier by the acceptor's fast transport speed. The *GL5* accepts $1, $2, $5, $10 and $20 dollar bills and is available in stackerless, down or upstacker configurations in varying stacker capacities.

Also shown at ACME, Mars is proud of their battery-powered bill acceptor which can operate for several months on a single 12-volt, 6.5 amp DC battery. The unit accepts $1 dollar bills and conserves battery life with a "sleep" feature which shuts power off until a bill is inserted. The battery-powered acceptor is available in a stackerless configuration.

For more information, contact Mars Electronics, 1301 Wilson Dr., West Chester, PA 19380; 800/345-8215.



CLASSICO billiard table from Comus International

The **Classico** is a sturdy indoor/outdoor billiard table manufactured in precast concrete (assembled by 25 separate pieces which bolt together). The playing surface is available in genuine Italian slate or a newly-produced slate substitute and is fitted with standard rubber cushions and stain-resistant green felt (protected by a fitted cover when not in use). The coin-op table is offered in 4'x8' and 4 1/2'x9' sizes and comes with leg screw adjustment capability. The table can be ordered in natural sandstone, marble or granite finishes.

For additional information, contact Comus International, 216 Bradwick Dr., Concord, Ontario, Canada L4K 1K5; 416/660-7692.

Pay Option Phone from Pay Phone Industries

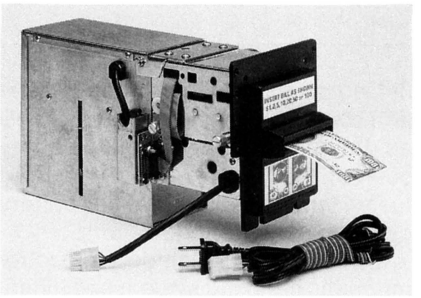
The **Pay Option Phone (POP)** is a compact pay phone allowing businesses to keep all coin revenue while

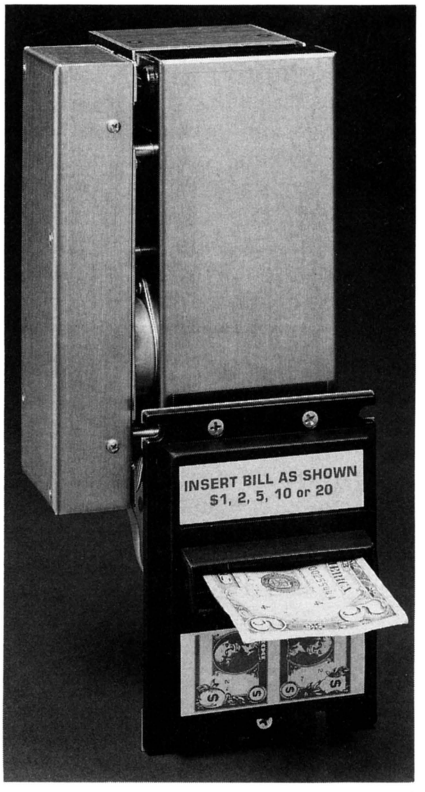


curbing employee abuse. The *POP* can be set up to charge 25 cents for local calls (3-5 min. or unlimited time) while blocking long distance calls. Emergency 911 is free. The *POP* works either as a pay or standard phone and may be obtained on a rental basis. Installation is fast (under one minute, says the firm) and simple using a standard modular phone plug. An optional steel case is available for wall-mounting. For additional information, contact Pay Phone Industries, 2415 Amherst, Bloomington, IN 47404; 812/333-9939.

New from Coin Bill Validator

Coin Bill's new **M-125** door-mount vending unit is designed for vending machines and comes with a 230-bill stacker. *M-125* is available with optional acceptance of $1, $2, $5, $10 and $20 dollar bills, and comes with RS232 "serial communication," LCD display, video lottery compatibility and





a full one-year warranty. The model is compatible with all changers and offers limited salting protection. As most of Coin Bill's validators, the *M-125* accepts international currency from many countries.

Also available from the manufacturer is an optional validator-stacker combination to their **M-IVO** currency validator model. The lockable and detachable stacker is offered in three capacities (500, 1000 and 2000 bill sizes) and comes complete with a high-security tubular-type key and screw-type lock. The validator and stacker combo is easily mounted together and all electrical connections are made automatically upon connection. Among the options available with the stacker unit is a high-security door lock assembly, electronic door lock sensor and an electronic counter/serial number. The unit can also be modified to accept foreign currency.

For more information, contact Coin Bill Validator, 367B Bay Shore Rd., Deer Park, NY 11729; 516/242-0100.

TOP HITS OF JAPAN

from Game Machine Magazine, June 1, 1992

TOP 25 VIDEO COCKTAIL

	Model (manufacturer)
1	St. Fighter II: Chp. Ed. (Capcom)
2	Street Fighter II (Capcom)
3	Aero Fighter (Video System)
4	Shanghai II (Sun Electronics)
5	Cosmo Gangs (Namco)
6	Quiz Dragnet II (SNK)
7	Quiz TV Variety Show (Dynax)
8	Baseball Stars 2 (SNK)
9	Raiden (Seibu)
10	Blaze On (Atlus)
11	Football Frenzy (SNK)
12	Super World Stadium (Namco)
13	Hat Trick Hero (Taito)
14	Quiz Stand Up Outside (Sega)
15	Power Spikes (Video System)
16	Quiz EDF (Taito)
17	Clutch Hitter (Sega)
18	Tetris (Sega)
19	World Cup '90 (Tecmo)
20	Columns (Sega)
21	Soccer Brawl (SNK)
22	Columns II (Sega)
23	Fatal Fury (SNK)
24	Knights of the Round (Capcom)
25	Seboten Bombers (NMK)

TOP 15 UPRIGHTS & COCKPITS

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Air Rescue (Sega)
2	Double Axle (Taito)
3	Driver's Eye (Namco)
4	Terminator 2 (Midway)
5	Final Lap 2 [del.] (Namco)
6	F1 Exhaust Note (Sega)
7	Rail Chase (Sega)
8	Steel Gunner 2 (Namco)
9	Super Monaco GP Twin (Sega)
10	Final Lap 2 [standard] (Namco)
11	Grand Prix Star (Jaleco)
12	StarBlade (Namco)
13	Rad Rally (Sega)
14	Captain Commando (Capcom)
15	Super Monaco GP (Sega)

TOP 5 FLIPPERS

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Hurricane (Williams)
2	Terminator 2 (Williams)
3	Star Trek (Data East)
4	Batman (Data East)
5	The Machine (Williams)

GRAPEVINE

international



NAMCO'S LATEST — We've been telling you for years how the best arcades are moving up to amusement park size and quality. Well, Namco Ltd. is leading the trend with their new Wonder Eggs theme park in the suburbs of Tokyo, Japan. It opened in February and, in addition to traditional coin-op equipment, the park offers virtual reality, Disney-style simulation "dark rides," carousels, water rides, etc. The ambitious project is sited on leased land and will operate for just five years, but it's getting worldwide attention including prominent coverage in a recent issue of *Insight Magazine.*

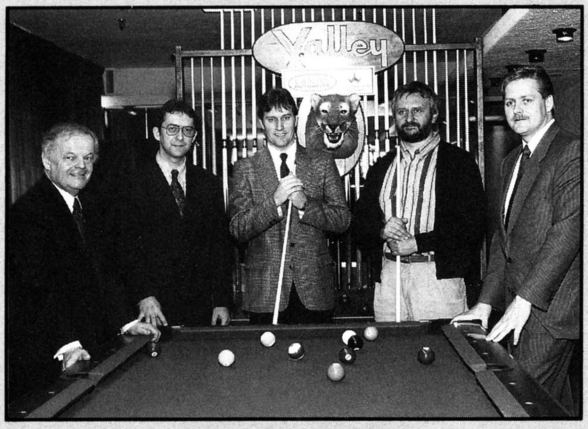
COIN-OP NEWS is the name of a new magazine whose launch was announced at the second Amusement and Leisure Equipment Exhibition (ALE) in Warsaw, Poland, April 1-4. *Coin-Op News* is described as a multilingual publication covering the Eastern European market and is seen as being an extremely necessary and timely magazine. Basically, *Coin-Op News* will be published monthly and will cover the amusement trade in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). The issues will feature a different Eastern European country each month with the main articles written in the highlighted countries' language. Additional information from individual countries will be published in their own language. All articles will also be published in English. The first issue will contain coverage of the ALE show along with information pertaining to the Polish market (it will also cover international news and product information). Its editor is Martin Dempsey, international trade correspondent for several coin-op trade magazines (including *RePlay).* For further information, please contact *Coin-Op News* at Enterprise Centre, Melitta Rd., Kildare, Ireland; 011-353-452-1190.



TRANS-ATLANTIC TEE OFF — April 10-13 saw the first event of the TACI (Trans Atlantic Coin-Op Industry) Golf Cup. Myrtle Beach, S.C. was the venue for the competition pitting a tough U.S. team against an enthusiastic (but jetlagged) British team. The tournament was comprised of 12 matches spread throughout three days and as fate would have it, the U.S. team dominated the event by winning the majority of matches. The brainchild of industry folks on both sides of the Atlantic, the TACI championship is expected to return next year. Pictured above is the U.S. team (left to right): Ragnar Korthase (Chemtech Plastics), Jay Graser (Scotch Die Casting), Bob and Ron Rollins (Coin Mechanisms), Mike Durec (Coin Acceptors), and team captain Frank Schubert of Coin Mechanisms. The British team drew golfers from Eurocoin, W. Evans and Partners and Bates and Partners. For more information on the TACI Cup Golf Championship, contact Frank Schubert at 708/980-0869.

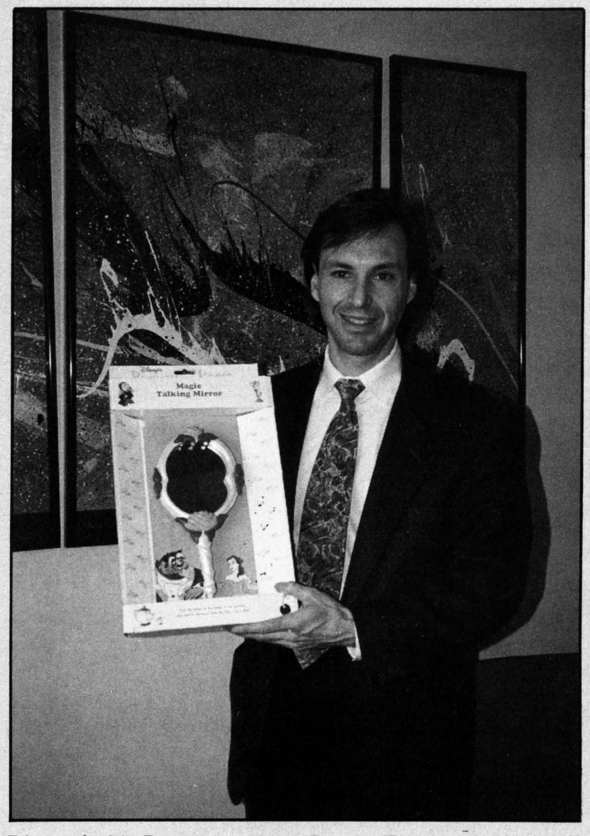


KUDOS IN CANADA — Sporting the plaque (and the juke), Laniel Automatic Machines' Jean Coutu, Michael Bergeron and Marc Raymond celebrate victory for scoring NSM's greatest sales increase for 1991. Shown below under the Cougar trophy for being Valley's top Canadian distributor for 15 consecutive years are VP Coutu, salesmen Bergeron and Raymond and two Hungarian distributors who recently visited the Montreal showrooms.



IGBE EUROPA '92 — The first European edition of the International Gaming Business Exhibition (IGBE) was held March 24 in Monte Carlo. Hundreds of people gathered from 29 countries to see the newest technology in the gaming industry. Hailing from different parts of the globe, exhibitors featured an array of products from slot machines to security equipment. Logically, IGBE Europa is organized by the same people who produce IGBE, held annually in Las Vegas. Future venues include Fontvieille, Monaco for IGBE Europa '93 (March 16-18) and Las Vegas' Bally Hotel and Casino for IGBE '93 (Feb. 9-10). For additional information, contact Eileen Baird at 203/852-0500, ext. 107.

SOMEDAY MY MIRROR WILL SING — Canadian arcade operator Wayne Fromm (Video Invasion, Toronto, Ontario) is getting more and more into product licensing with the Walt Disney Co. He's already sold 600,000 "Little Mermaid" bubble blowers and perfume bottles in the U.S. and Europe. Wayne is shown here with his next project, a nifty "Magic Mirror" like the one seen in



Disney's hit *Beauty and the Beast.* The mirror "talks" in the actual voices of several leading characters and (using a confidential, patented process) illuminates their cartoon images in the reflecting glass. The Disney people were quite excited and it's easy to see why. Wayne wrote the dialog and, through Disney, got the original cast to record their lines. It will be on the market by Christmas here through the Applause network; Wayne's also seeking worldwide distribution. "All of my staff are part of these projects," Wayne stated. "They can not only fix a coin jam, but also get on the phone and negotiate distribution in the United Kingdom."

southeast

FUN EXPO '92 — Building on the success of last year's inaugural show in Atlanta, Fun Expo (the International Family Fun Center and Miniature Golf show) is gearing up for a bigger and better trade show September 17-19 at the New Orleans Convention Center. (More than 95% of last year's exhibitors plan to return and nearly 20% of this year's exhibitors will be newcomers, according to show organizers). New to this show will be the debut of two interactive-themed pavilions displaying the latest concepts in redemption and mini-golf. This and the extensive lineup of seminars have drawn a number of exhibitors and attendees and organizers expect to host a whale of an expo! For more information, contact show manager Bailey Beeken at 914/682-2027.

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NIGHT CLUB & BAR Hotel*Restaurant*Beverage Show will be held July 26-28 at the New Orleans Convention Center. The show is the largest specialty bar expo in the nation and features a wide range of hospitality industry product and service exhibits as well as a series of specialized workshops and seminars. Sports bar concepts are among the hot formats that will be featured in New Orleans and president of America's Original Sports Bar, Joyce Reynolds (above) along with consultant Charlie Greener will be among the speakers. For additional show information, call 800/247-3881.

midwest



MARIE SHAW has been appointed manager of meeting services for the National Automatic Merchandising Assn. (NAMA). Marie will assist in the preparation, promotion and execution of all association trade shows and meetings, as well as coordinating hotel and travel negotiations. The newest addition to NAMA's staff comes to her post after years of management experience with two other companies in the Chicago area.

THEFT PROTECTION — The easiest way for an employer to protect against employee theft is to hire an honest employee. The POS Corp. (Chicago, Ill.) wants to help. They have made a Pre-employment Opinion Survey available to all businesses who want to evaluate a prospective employee. The POS survey is a true-false questionnaire which takes the applicant about ten minutes to complete. Then, by calling a toll free number, the employer can have a risk level reported on the employee — based on the survey results. For a four-page bulletin describing the service, call the company at 800/621-4008 or 312/792-3788 (Illinois callers).



FUN FUNDRAISING — The Warehouse of Games (St. Louis, Mo.) hosted a fundraising party on Feb. 8 for the benefit of the area's Good Shepherd School for Children. Over 200 people enjoyed hundreds of games with team competition on videos, pinball, shuffle alleys and electronic darts. The event raised $10,000 for the Good Shepherd School which helps children with developmental and communication disabilities. The pic shows Warehouse of Games' Bobbi and Larry Potashnick.

HAVING A SAY — For the Music and Vending Assn. of South Dakota (MVA), the 1992 Legislative session may be remembered most for the number of game and vending-related bills filed. The bills related to such as video lottery, cigarette vending machines, the amusement device tax, and so on. Among the proposed bills, there were a fair share approved as well as those that didn't make it. But for MVA, getting involved really paid off! Hope all state associations are doing the same.

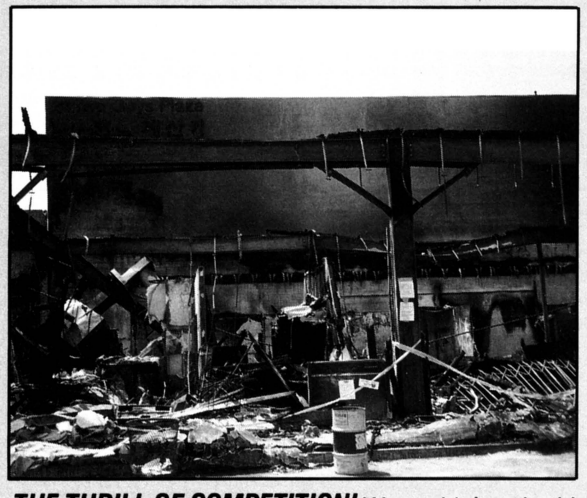
HESCH HELPS — The Amusement and Music Operators Assn. (AMOA) is pleased with the progress of its Wayne E. Hesch Scholarship program since it awarded a record 39 scholarships at its winter board meeting. In memory of AMOA 1978-79 president Wayne Hesch, the fund has doled out $100,000 in college scholarship money since its inception in 1985. The scholarship is awarded in the amount of $1,000 (paid in increments of $500) and is open to anyone wishing to attend college. AMOA's goal is to provide one scholarship to a worthwhile candidate in each state. If you would like to sponsor an individual (you may also provide the program as a company benefit), you may obtain applications by contacting Cathleen Carlson at 312/245-1021.

AMERICAN GAMING AND ENTERTAINMENT is the name of a new company in Elk Grove Village, Ill. owned and operated by Peter Chlopek (formerly with Happ Controls and Video Games de Mexico). Pete tells us he will distribute for some of the top names in the business and commit to "priceless and priced less service." Dealing in joysticks, buttons, switches, monitors, PCBs, etc., American Gaming and Entertainment specializes in exporting to Mexico, South and Central America. You can get in touch with Pete at 708/593-7553.

southwest

CENTURY OPEN HOUSE — Jerry and Sue Monday say their Century Vending & Distributing (Gardena, Calif.) will host its first-ever open house June 17, featuring redemption games and factory reps. Be there!

SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR as named by America's Original Sports Bar (itself a winner with *Night Club and Bar Magazine's* Night Club of the Year and Operator of the Year awards) was National Sports Games' *UB-QB Football Challenge.* The full award title is the "Original Sports Bar Game of the Year" and in its behalf America's Original Sports Bar prexy Joyce McReynolds said, *"UB-QB* has made a significant contribution to our operations this year in terms of our share of the game's revenue, the entertainment of our customers and the enhancement of our sports-oriented atmosphere." Based in Phoenix, Ariz., National Sports Games is thrilled with the recognition. In addition to *UB-QB,* the company manufactures the *Super Shot* single- and double-hoop basketball games as well as the newly-released *Pitch Hitter Baseball Challenge.* For a distributor near you, call NSG at 602/470-1490.

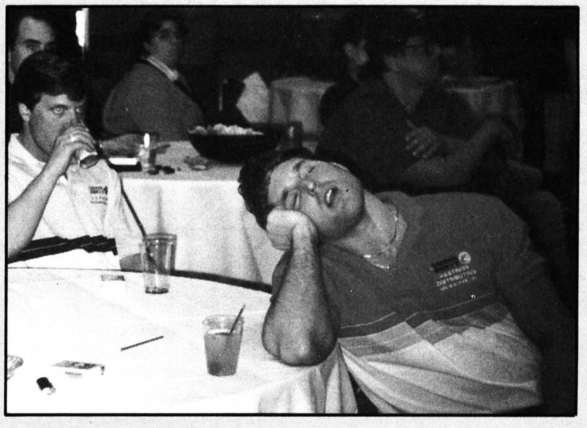


THE THRILL OF COMPETITION! We couldn't resist this photo from the recent Valley dart championships in Las Vegas (see the story in Tournament Highlights, page 153). This just proves that sometimes non-stop action and excitement can be too much to handle!



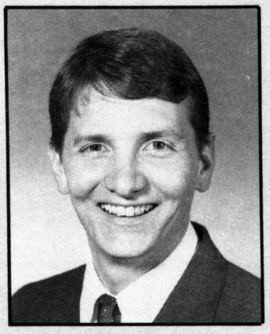


TOM VISITS L.A. — Williams/Bally service topper Tom Cahill dropped by C.A. Robinson (Los Angeles) on Wednesday, May 20 for a pinball service school on *Getaway* and *The Addams Family.* It was jam-packed and during the break, Ira, Sandy, Hank and the gang served up their traditional lunch. A fine affair.



Our Debbie Anderson snapped this photo of riot damage on her return trip from the service school at C.A. Robinson. Many other locations just as demolished as this on her route back.

northeast



ATLAS DISTRIBUTORS (Pittsburgh) has appointed Robert J. Busche as new music and game sales rep. Robert has been with the company for five years, starting as a delivery truck driver and working his way through Atlas' hands-on training program to a full-time sales position. Hard work pays. Congratulations!

STAR*TECH JOURNAL has added a seminar date to its already extensive agenda. Slated for June 20 in Shelbyville, Tenn., the "Repairing Video Card Games & 8-Line Machines" session will take place from 9:30AM to 5PM. Taught by Don Powell of Don's Video Repair, the class cost is $195 for pre-registered students and $225 for walk-ups. For additional site and general information, contact *Star*Tech* at 609/662-1080.

BRABCO is a new state-of-the-art, full-service security agency established primarily for the family entertainment center. Frank Brabham, the company's founder, is a highly decorated former police detective with more than 20 years law enforcement training and experience. Together with other former policemen, Frank provides efficient and discreet guard security of fun centers. So far, Brabco has enjoyed tremendous success with clients in four states. For additional information, call 914/328-7590.

DATEBOOK

JUNE 8-9
AMOA/AAMA Joint Legislative Conf., Hyatt Capitol Hill (AMOA quarters) and Washington Court (AAMA), Washington, D.C. For more info, call AAMA at 703/494-2755 or AMOA at 312/245-1021.

JUNE 11-13
Radio & Records 1992 Convention, Century Plaza Hotel, Century City, Calif. For more information, call R&R at 310/553-4330.

JUNE 19-21
ICMOA Annual Meeting, Continental Regency Hotel, Peoria. For more information, call ICMOA at 708/369-2406.

JULY 17-19
AMOT (Texas) annual convention, Westin Paso del Norte, El Paso. For information, call 214/918-9593.

JULY 22-23
Latin American Amusement, Music and Games Expo, Sheraton Maria Isabel, Mexico City. For more information, contact Bill Glasgow, Inc. at 708/333-9292.

JULY 23-25
Ninth Annual Billiard Congress of America Int'l Trade Expo, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri. For more info, call Frank Zdy at 619/278-3877.

JULY 24-25
PAMMA (Pennsylvania) 10th anniversary convention, Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Champion. For more information, call 717/232-5322.

JULY 26-28
Nightclub & Bar Hotel*Restaurant*Beverage 12th annual show, New Orleans, Lousiana. For more information, call 800/247-3881.

AUGUST 27-29
JAMMA (Japan) trade show, Ryutsu Centre, Tokyo. For more information, contact JAMMA at 011-813-593-2562.

SEPTEMBER 10-13
NCAMA (North Carolina) convention, Stouffer Winston Plaza Hotel, Winston-Salem. For more info, call Bobby Earp at 919/584-4833.

OCTOBER 1-3
AMOA Expo '92, Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, Nashville, Tenn. For more information, call AMOA at 312/245-1021.

OCTOBER 15-18
ENADA '92, (Italian trade show), Rome Fair, Rome. For more information, call SAPAR-AGIS (Italy's trade assn.) at 011-39-6-440-3686.

NOVEMBER 5-7
NAMA National Convention, Trade Show and Education Sessions, Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C. For more information, call 312/346-0370.

NOVEMBER 12-15
Pinball Expo and Flip Out Tournament, Ramada Inn O'Hare, Rosemont, Ill. For more information, call 800/323-3547.

THE BLUE PAGES

BUYERS' BULLETIN

A COMPENDIUM OF USED EQUIPMENT ADS & OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COIN INDUSTRY

A number of video game manufacturers have been successful in enforcing their copyrights and trademarks in the U.S. courts against those who supply or use unlawful copies. Readers are warned of the risks involved when copies of video games are purchased from sources other than the manufacturer or one of its authorized distributors. We can offer no assurance that a video game or printed circuit board set purchased from all the sources of such are legitimate. RePlay asks its readers to write us regarding any complaints about a product or service advertised in this magazine.

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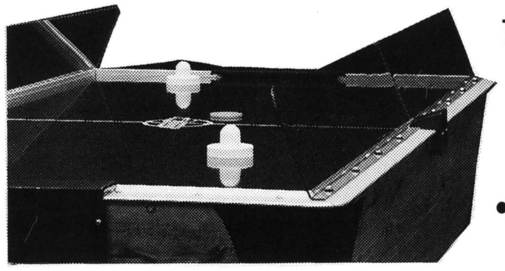

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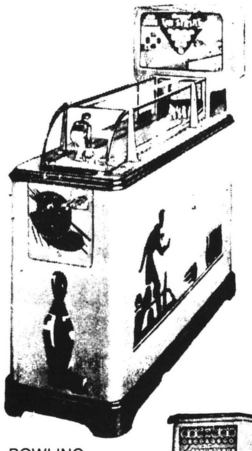

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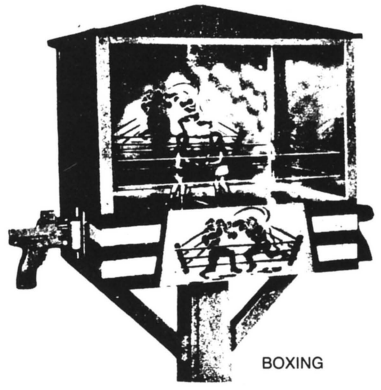

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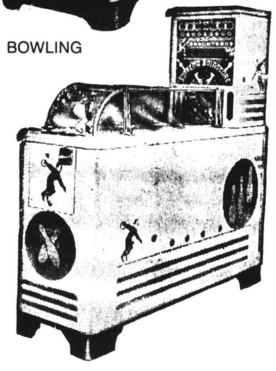

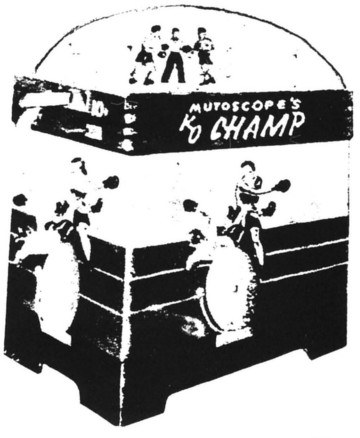

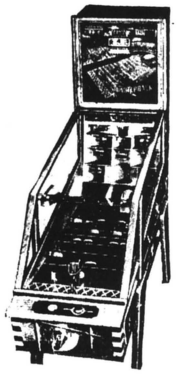

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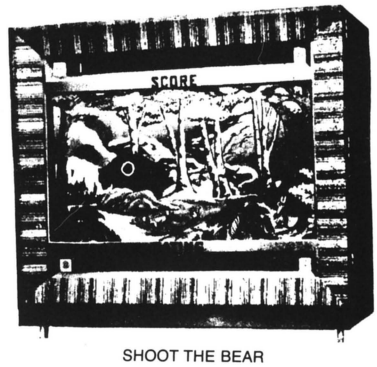

SHOOT THE BEAR



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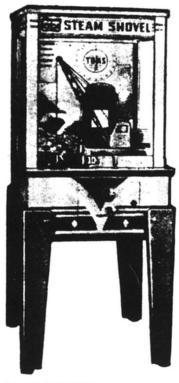

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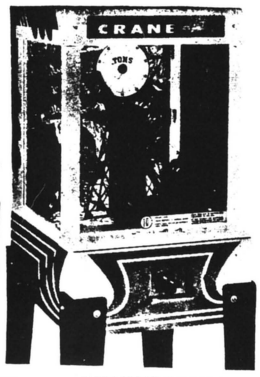
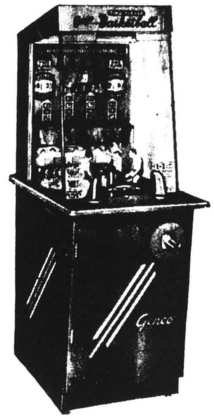
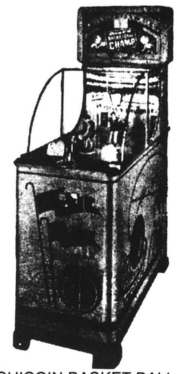


WILLIAMS CRANE







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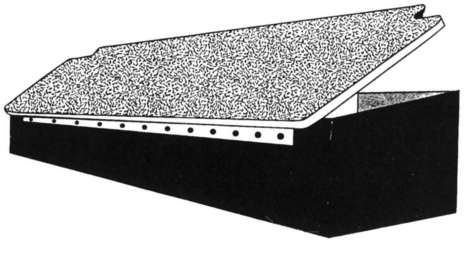

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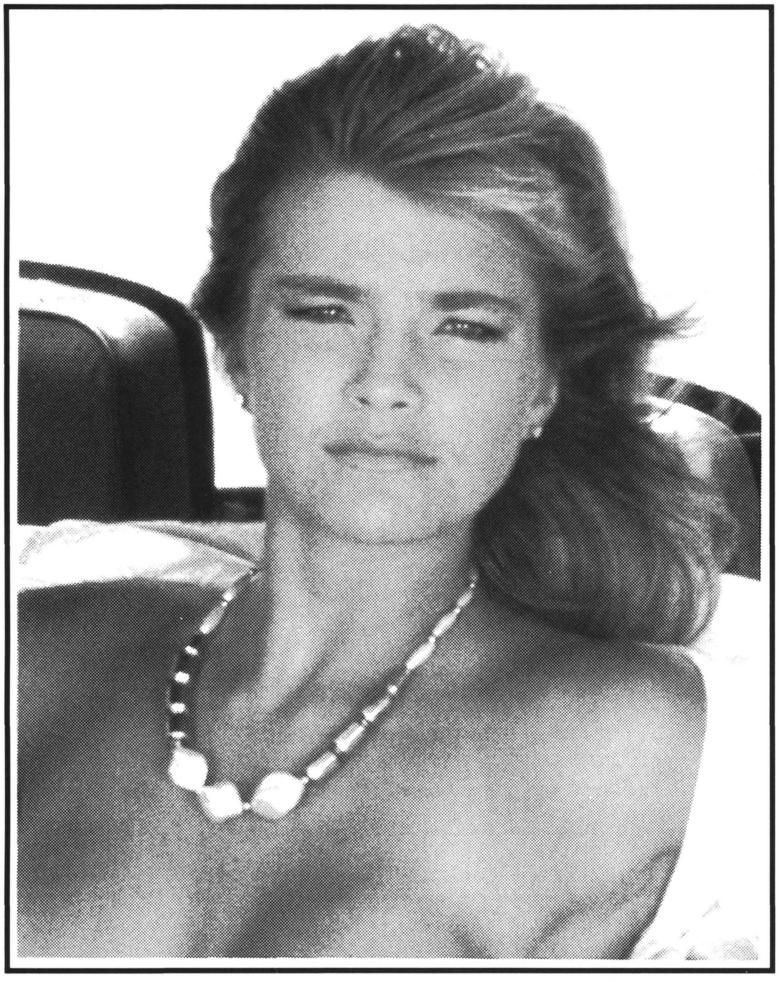

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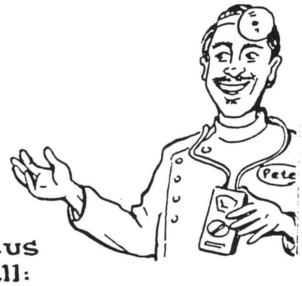

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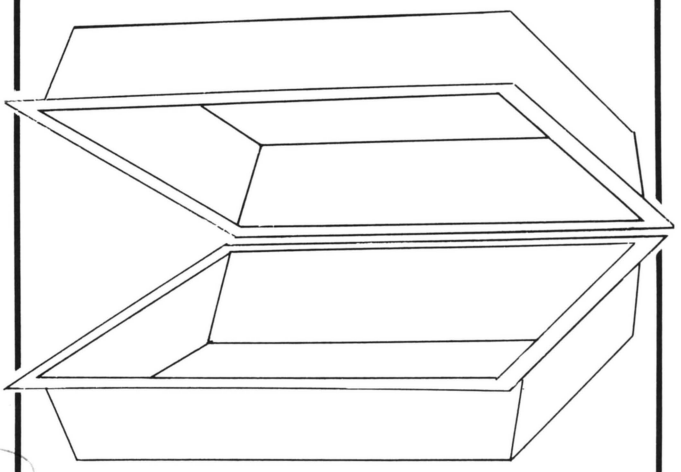

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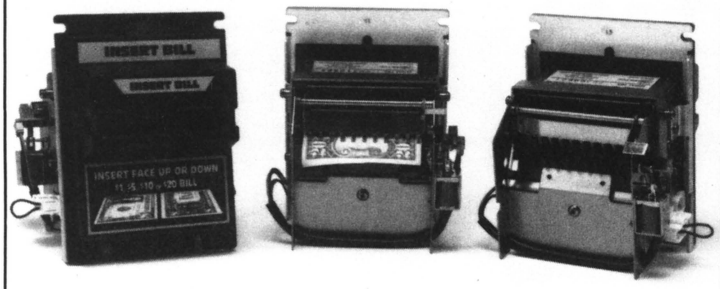

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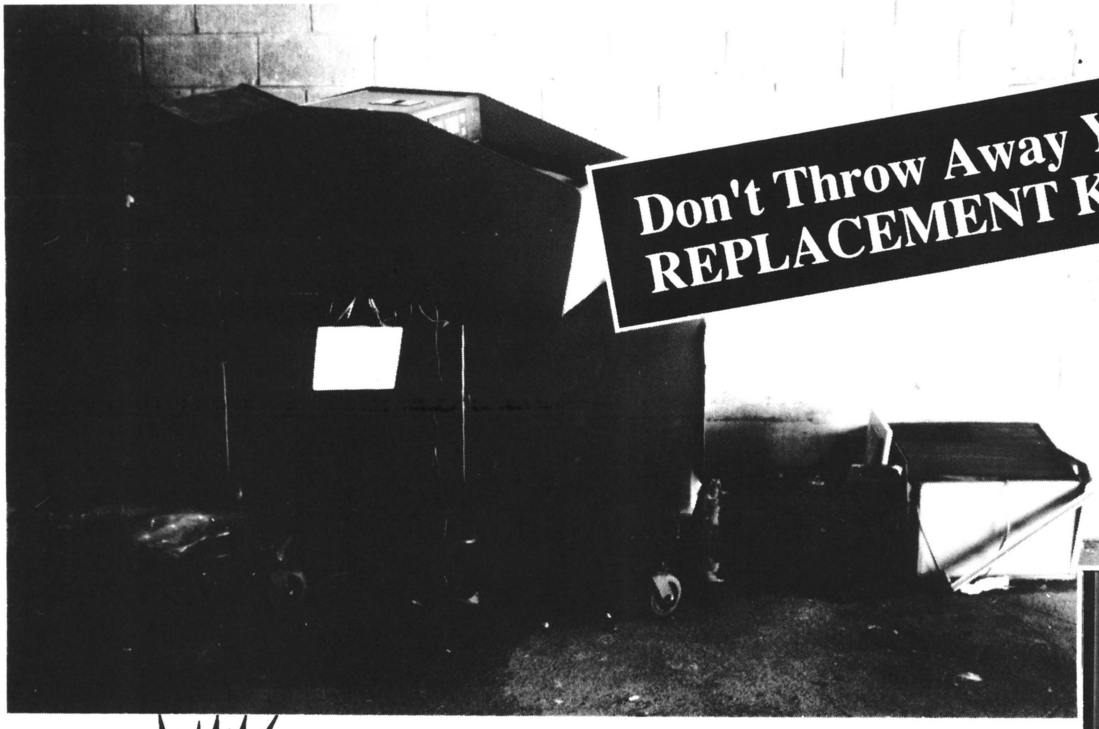

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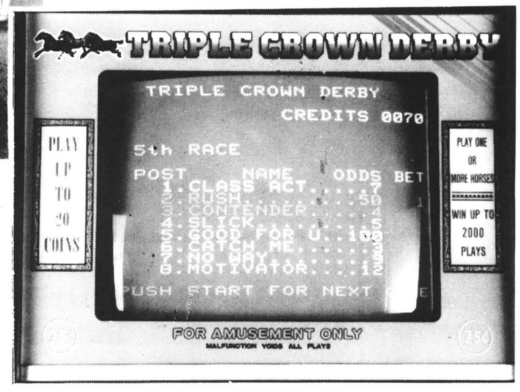

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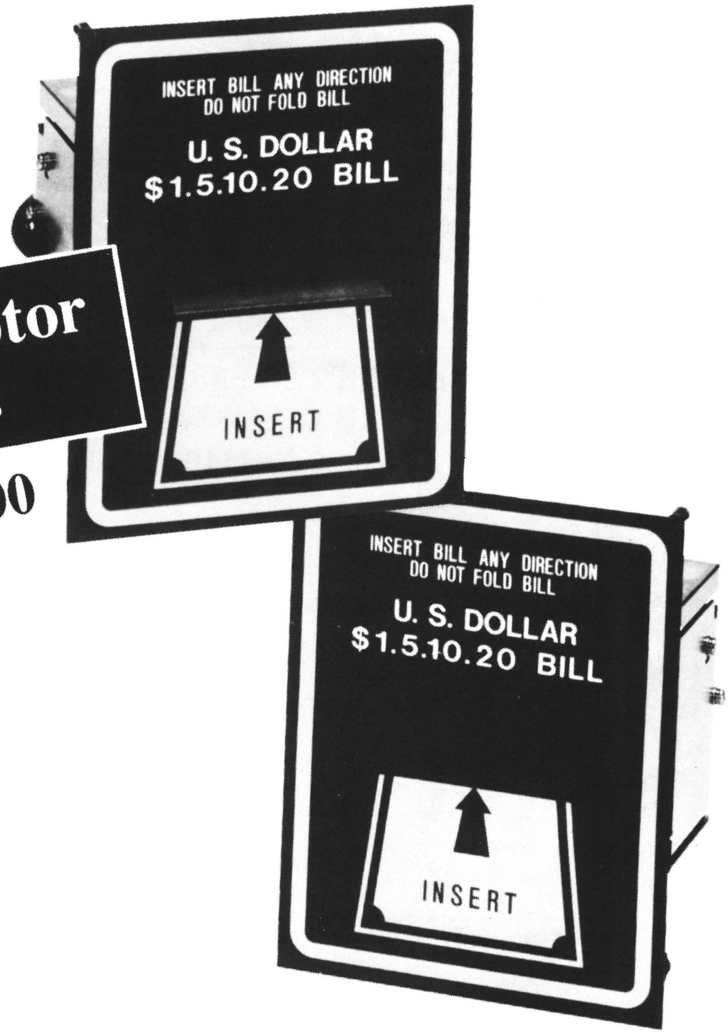

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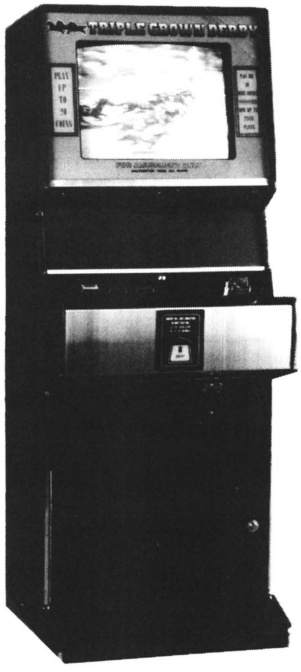

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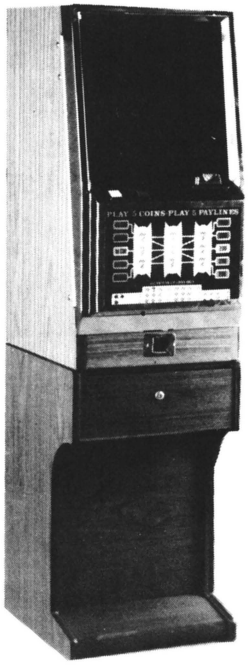

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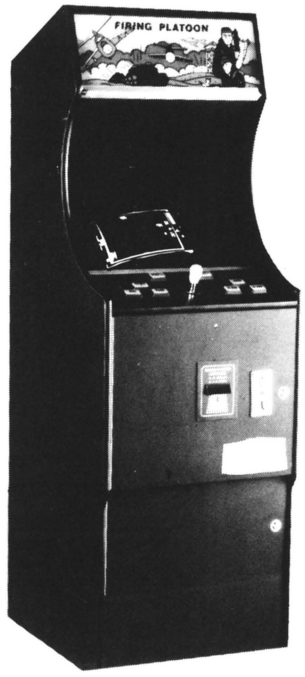

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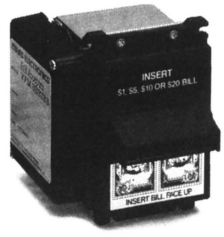

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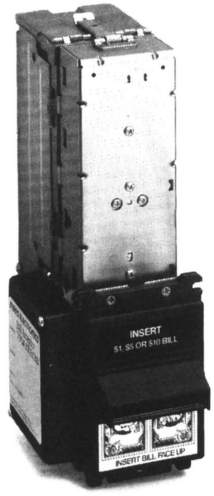

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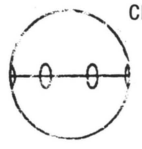



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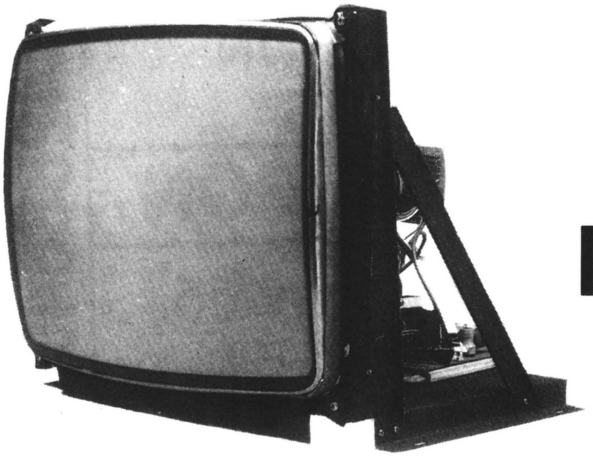

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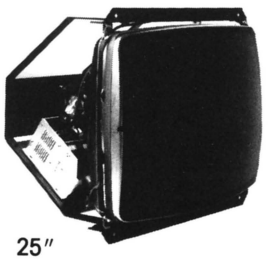

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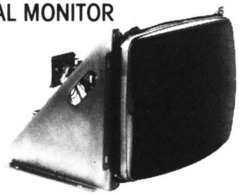

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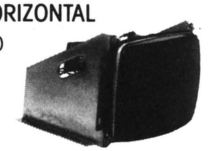



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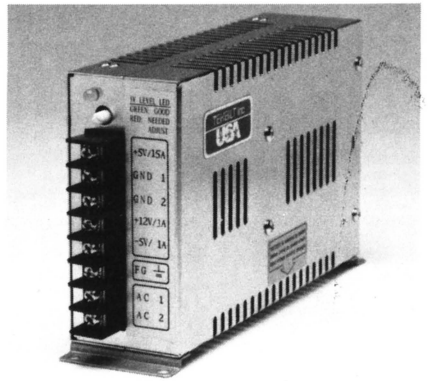

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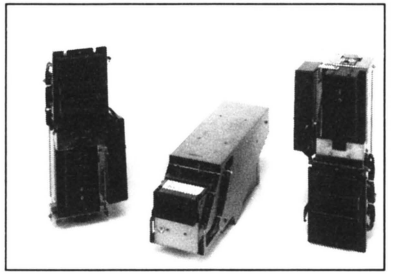

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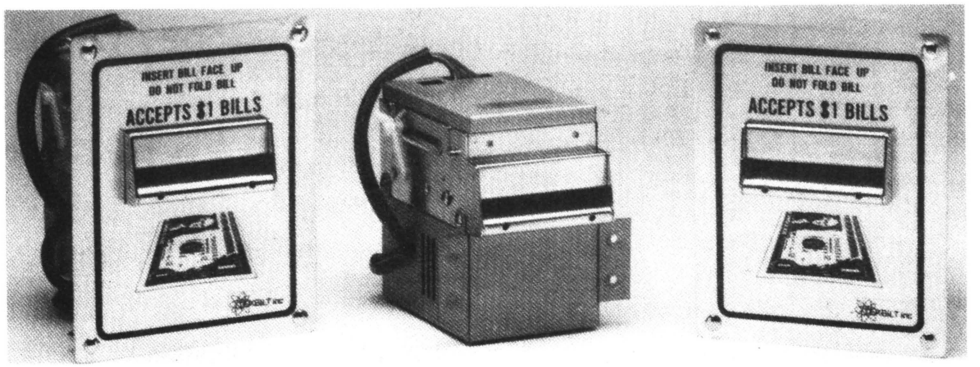

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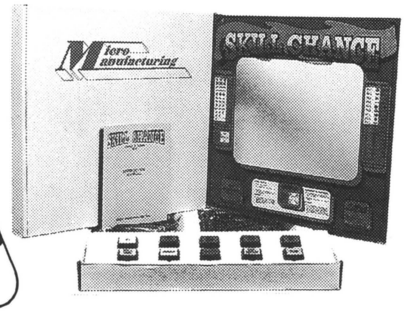

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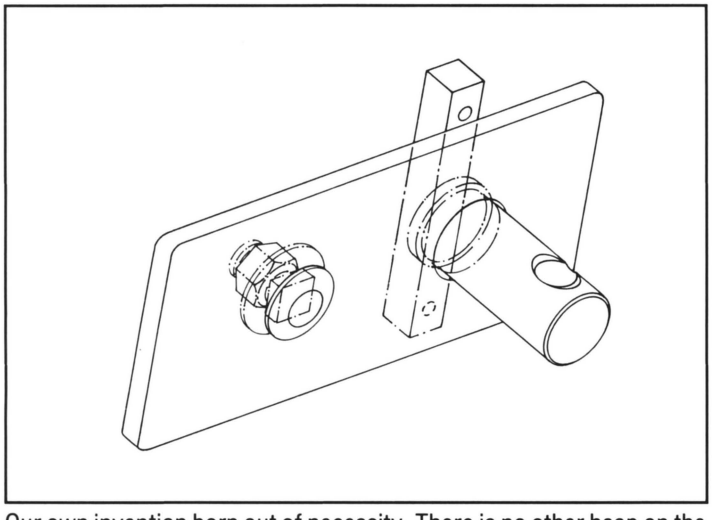

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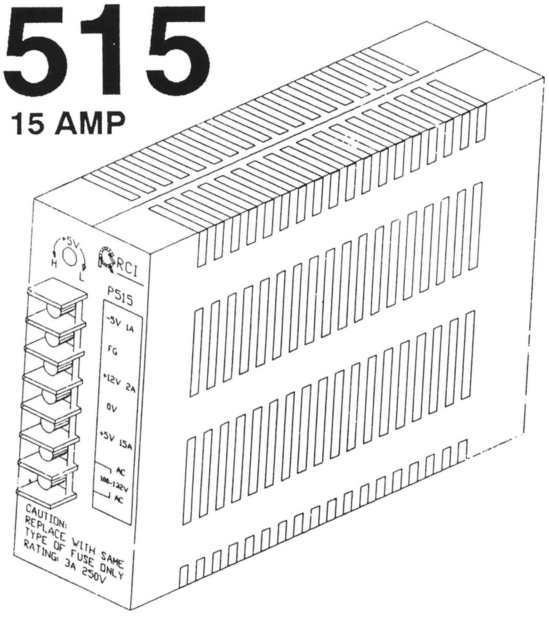

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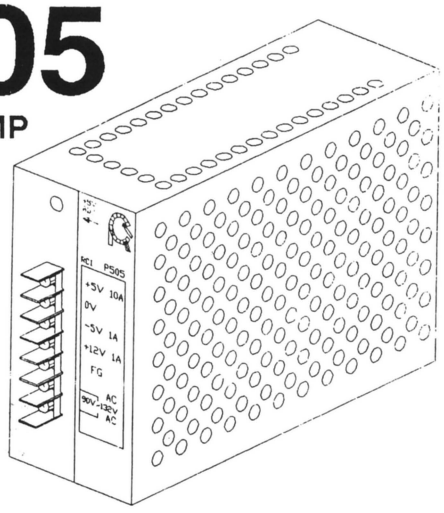

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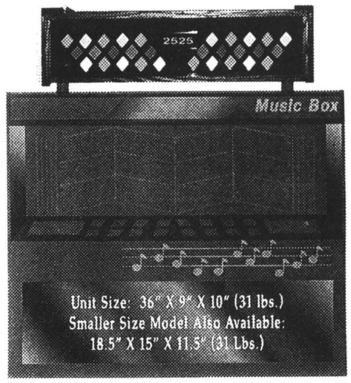

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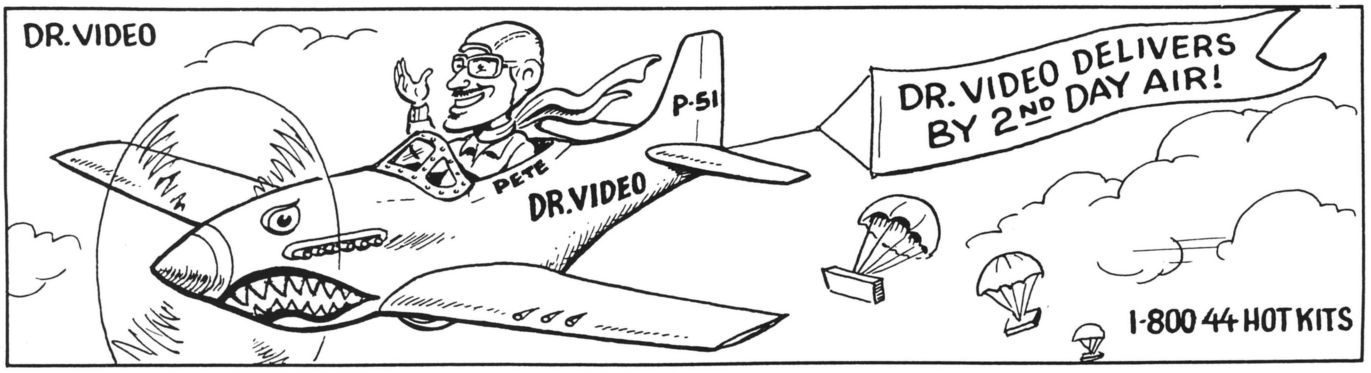

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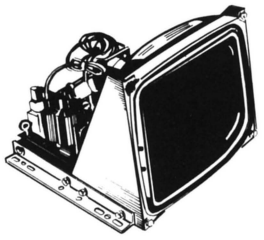

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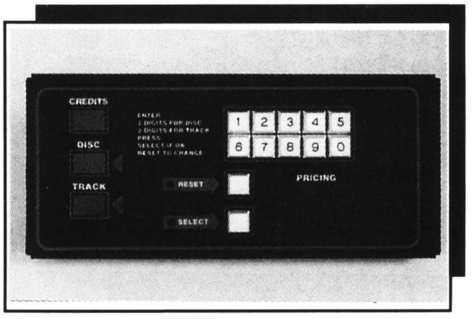

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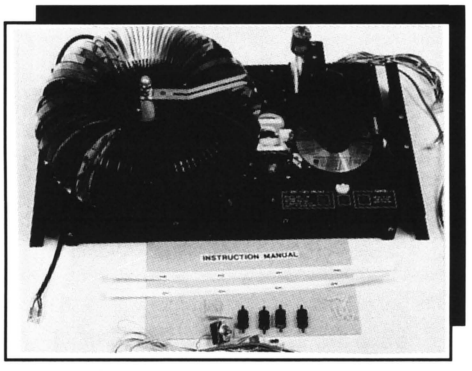

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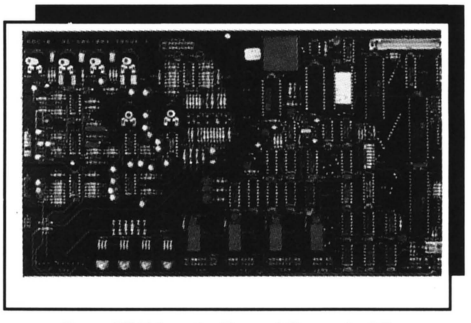

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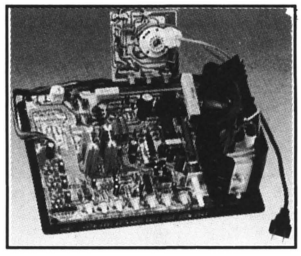

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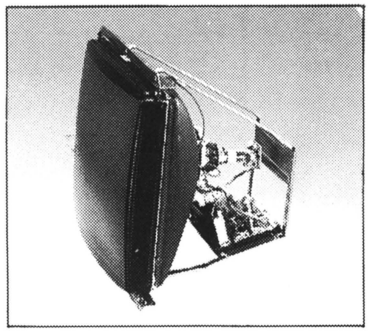

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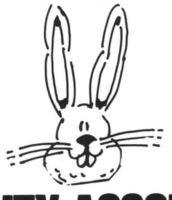

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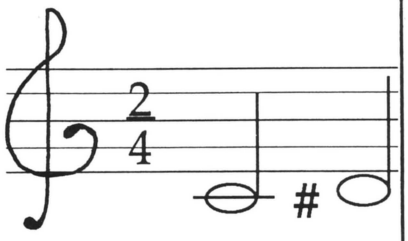

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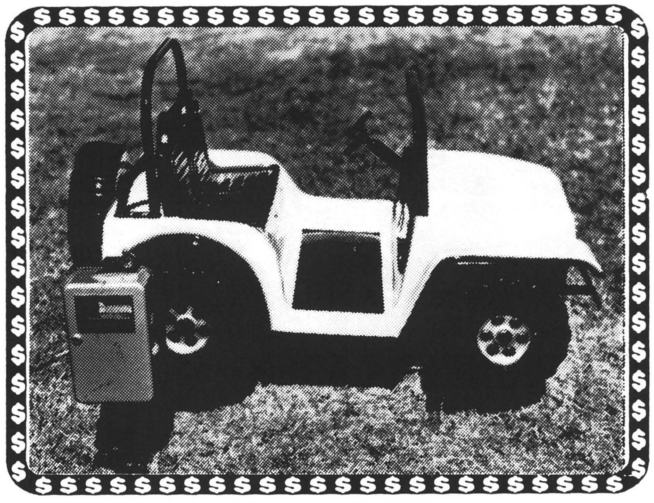

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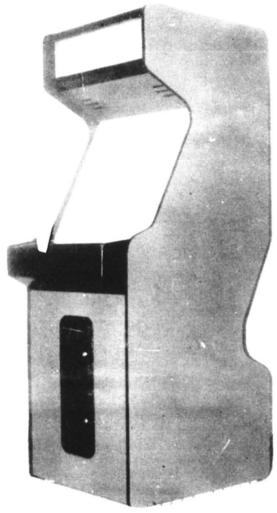

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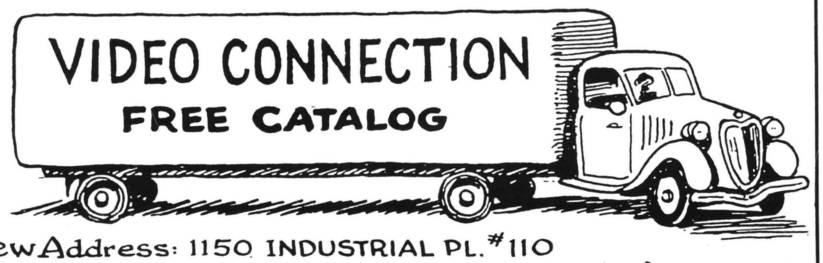

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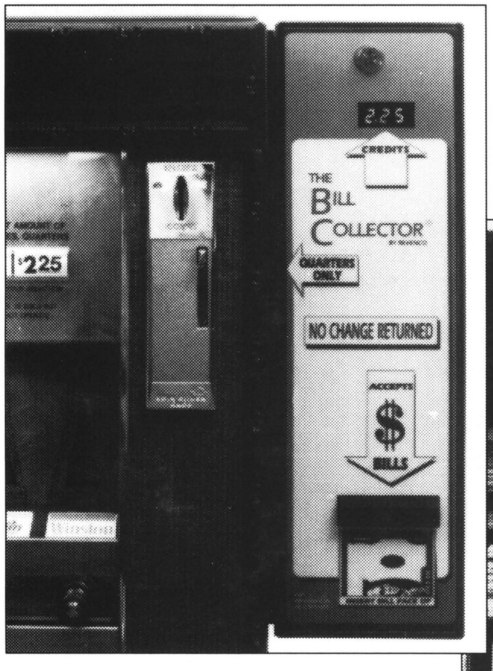

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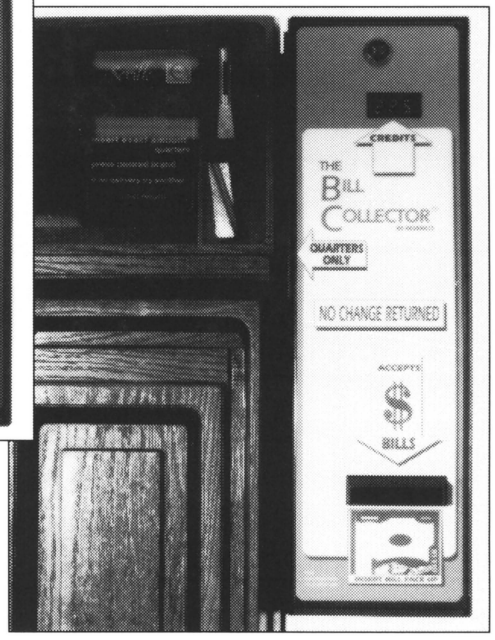

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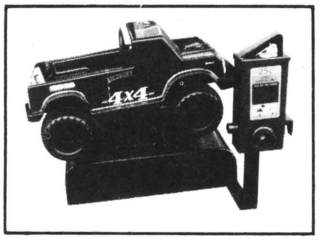

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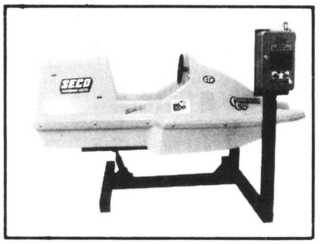

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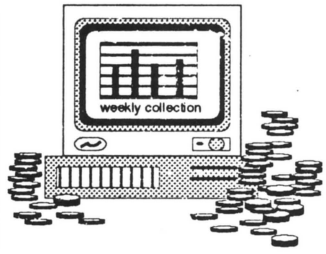

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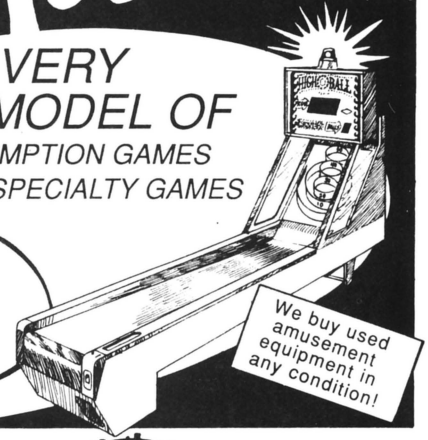

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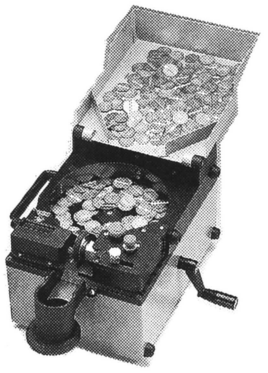

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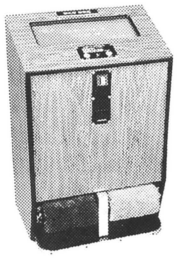

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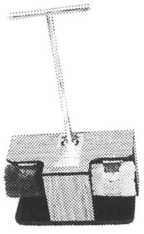

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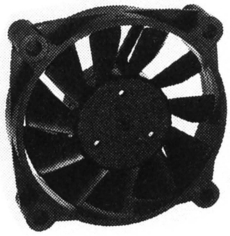

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