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March 2006 Volume 18, Number 3

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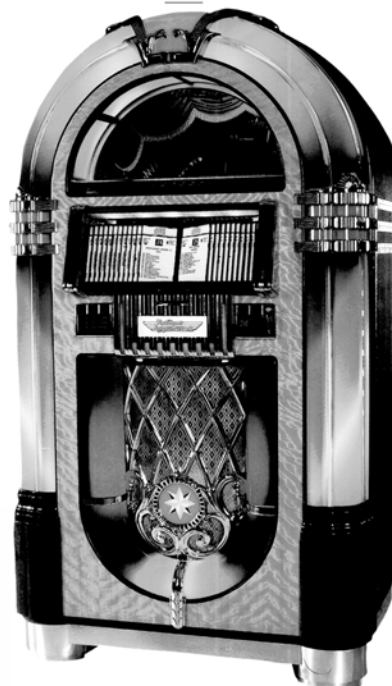
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GameRoom (USPS 004-828)(ISSN 1049-3948) Vol 18 No 3 March 2006. Published monthly by Steele Publishing LLC, 12943 Kingston Way, North Royalton, OH 44133-5968. Rates: \$34-1 yr (US), \$54-1st Class 1 yr (US), \$81-Priority 1 yr (US), \$62-2 yrs (US), \$36-1 yr (Canada), \$64-1 yr (Canada Air), \$55-1 yr (Europe Surface), \$115-1 yr (Europe Air), \$59-1 yr (Pacific Basin Surface), \$125-(Pacific Basin Air). Periodicals Postage Paid at Cleveland, OH and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: GameRoom Magazine, PO Box 33490, North Royalton, OH 44133-0490. © 2006 GameRoom. Reprint or reproduction of any material in part or in whole without the publishers' written permission is strictly forbidden. Editorial views expressed by contributing writers are not necessarily endorsed by GameRoom. All rights to letters sent to GameRoom will be treated as unconditionally assigned to GameRoom for publication unless they are labeled otherwise. GameRoom assumes no responsibility for the authority of advertisers to sell transferred property.



EDITOR'S PAGE

WARNING: Gale force Winds of Change forecast for the coming months, with a 20% chance of total upheaval...

Change. It seems inevitable, unavoidable, and no matter how much you try to anticipate and plan ahead, it always seems to creep up and take you by surprise.

Remember how I promised a series of gradual changes in the magazine? Well, someone upstairs must have read my roadmap for the future and just laughed. There is much more change in this issue than I was expecting, and almost none of it was in my original plans. Change leapt out of the shadows this month, hit me over the head, and then rewrote my plans while I was still trying to figure out which end was up (I was going to quote a Native American saying, "Nothing lasts forever but the earth and sky," until I realized I was actually quoting the rock group *Kansas*!)

But I digress. This issue of GameRoom represents a departure from the norm in more ways than I had planned or wanted — it is with great sadness that I have to announce that two columnists have their "farewell" columns in this issue. This is the last month for both Bill Bickers' *Sound Advice* and Glenn Strope's *Blue Moon Jukebox Banter*. Both writers have been invaluable assets to this magazine, and their presence in the pages of GameRoom will be sorely missed. Don't worry — this isn't the end of juke coverage, either — I've got a surprise for next month!

On a positive note, not all change is bad — please join me in welcoming David Ellis as a new GameRoom columnist. David is a prolific gamer and writer, author of a number of gaming-related guides and books, including *The Official Price Guide to Classic Video Games: Console, Arcade, and Handheld Games*. David will be writing a column entitled *The Wayback Machine*, which will look at pivotal moments in videogaming history and their impact on the gaming industry and society.

This issue also marks the unveiling of another new column: *GameRoom News*, a summary of recent arcade and coin-op related news compiled by James McGovern, site manager for GameRoom's companion website *RetroBlast! Home Arcade News and Reviews*. James is a fantastic newshound, and I'm sure you'll enjoy his unique take on the amusement industry.

Even with all of this unexpected change, there's still a lot of that old-fashioned GameRoom goodness in this issue: We have an exciting look at Stern's new *World Poker Tour* by Scott Voisin, and Herb Silvers has another great *GameRoom of the Month* to present. I even get to report about a weird and wonderful Japanese game for pre-teen girls in *You've Got to Be Kidding*!

While this issue has much more change than I had originally planned, there is even more change coming soon — GameRoom is growing, and it looks to be a wild ride. Sit down, buckle in, and hang on tight!

The Game is Never Over,

Kevin Steele, Editor

MARCH 2006

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TIME TO ANTE UP!

by Scott Voisin

Texas Hold 'Em poker has been around for over a hundred years, but it wasn't until 2003 that it became a worldwide phenomenon, thanks in part to the World Poker Tour. For those who don't know, the WPT is a series of televised tournaments featuring players battling for millions of dollars in a game that takes a minute to learn and a lifetime to master. Now, the folks at Stern are hoping the WPT can do for pinball what it did for poker. Not only does the World Poker Tour pinball boast a full house of creative talent — legendary designer Steve Ritchie, software engineer Keith Johnson and sound expert Chris Granner — WPT also contains a brand-new hardware system that finally brings pinball into the 21st century. GameRoom goes behind-the-scenes for a pair of revealing and in-depth interviews with Steve Ritchie and Keith Johnson.



WPT Coverage Part I: An Interview with Steve Ritchie

Scott Voisin: *How did you become involved with the World Poker Tour pinball?*

Steve Ritchie: Gary Stern asked me to do it. It wasn't my idea of a great pinball license at the time, but I'm totally happy with it now. In fact, this game — of all my designs — has made the biggest transition from a theme I absolutely hated to something I love. I think it's going to do really well. I have to know in my heart that I have a shot at a prospective licensed game doing very well. If I don't have that shot, it kind of takes the wind out of the sails. In the beginning, I didn't think we had a good shot, but we have made absolutely the best we can of **WPT** and Texas Hold 'Em, and it's fun to play.

SV: *What didn't you like initially about the idea?*

SR: One thing was that I don't think anybody was asking for a poker-themed pinball machine, although they have been very popular in the past. Another item that may have been an obstacle is that most people understand poker, but a lot of people don't, so I feared that we would have to overlay a set of poker rules over another set of pinball rules, and sometimes people are confused by the pinball rules alone. Another reason is that it just wasn't a high-impact theme. It's kind of quiet, and there hasn't been a dedicated poker pinball game in a long time. Maybe there was a good reason for that. *(laughs)* That combination of things definitely scared me, but the result is an exciting, fun, unique game to play.

SV: *What changed your mind about the project?*

SR: Well, as the playfield started to work better and as Keith Johnson's rules were added, it became a very nice collection of kinetics and fun rules, and making the shots is magic. There's a little upper playfield that just turned out so nice. It doesn't look that impressive, but there is a device that captures the



ball and releases it. You have to beat on it again a number of times to get the ball to come out, then you can put it back in when you have two balls out and get a third ball and a fourth. It's just fun. The other thing I like about it is that every ball you shoot with the plunger starts out on the upper playfield, so everybody gets a shot at beating on the captured ball device, which is called the "Ace in the Hole."

SV: *Tell me about some of the things that happen in the game.*

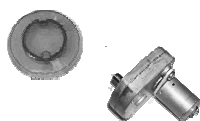
SR: There are sixteen drop targets, and that's a lot by anybody's measure. They're placed in such a way on the playfield that they enhance each other. In other words, if you smack the ball into the lower two targets of the right bank, they go down and the ball goes to the center bank and takes out two more, and then from there to the left bank and maybe takes out two more. It's possible to nail six or seven targets in one shot. It just worked out really nice. I worked at this on my dining room table with a drawing taped to it and the legs on one end jacked up to 6.5 degrees. I simulated play with a real ball and real rubber, and I'm totally happy with it. The drop targets are one of the many games within **WPT**, and it's called "Drop Target Poker." With the drop targets, you try to get a pair, two pair, three of a kind, etc. until you work your way up through all the possible poker hands. The real skill comes when you don't have any of the poker hands and you pick off a Royal Flush or other high hand without completing the lesser hands below it in the game. You get a big score for that.

SV: *How does Texas Hold 'Em poker come into play?*

SR: Texas Hold 'Em is another of the many games within **WPT**. We have outlined the components for this game in Yellow, so it's easy to follow. Hole cards are awarded at the beginning of each game and at the end of a completed Texas Hold 'Em hand. The player then shoots the left and right ramps, which continuously score the Flop, Turn, and River. Each time a ramp shot is made, the scored cards are displayed in a large LED display embedded in the playfield. Completion of Texas Hold 'Em hands take you to the cities you need to get through to get to the *World Poker Tour* championship. There are seven cities and countries from around the world, and you win your way through poker hands to get to the championship. The first city only takes one poker hand, and you transit from there to the next city. The cities are selected randomly — it doesn't always start with the same one — and there's some flavored music that goes with each city. In the second



The "Ace in the Hole"
(Playfield Photos courtesy of Vincent Giovannone)



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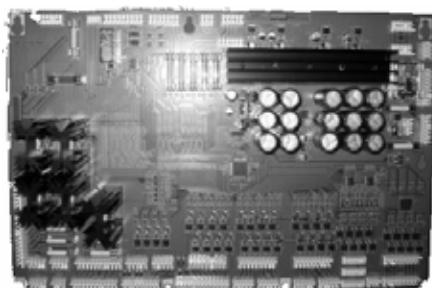
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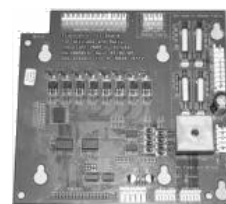
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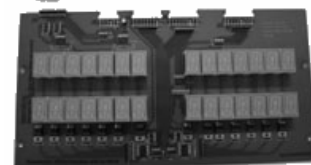
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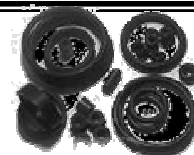
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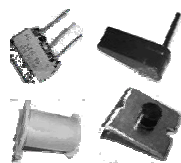


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city — which takes two hands to complete — the extra ball lights, which is really valuable. It's in the right place in the game where an average player on his third ball might actually have a shot at scoring the extra ball to continue the game. And then there are other awards, right up to the *World Poker Tour* championship.

SV: *What were some of the challenges you had in designing the game?*

SR: Some of the geometry gave me fits, and it took awhile to iron out some wrinkles that we had. (*laughs*) I'm not going to go into what they were now — maybe somebody will guess what they were — but actually it all turned out pretty nice.

SV: *Were there any features or gadgets that you wanted to include originally but couldn't?*

SR: Yes, there was. There was a device in front of the center four-bank, which consisted originally of stand-up targets instead of drops. We had put our hopes into this device in the center of the playfield, consisting of four rotating targets that did different things. Anyway, it kind of turned out to be an expensive disaster, so we backed off. That same day, I decided to use 16 drop targets in the design.

SV: *Which is more difficult to do: Design a game with an original concept, or design a game based on a licensed property?*

SR: There's nothing about either classification of game that's harder or easier. I guess sometimes it can be harder when you're dealing with a license that limits you. Many years ago with *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, the ladies that operated the licensing department at Paramount did not want me to fire phasers or photon torpedoes in the game. I said, "Are you kidding me?" I've watched *Star Trek* all my life and I'm totally familiar with the Prime Directive. I just couldn't believe they were going to be so hypocritical. Let's face it, the captain fires photon torpedoes and the phasers if the *Enterprise* is attacked, and we wanted to do the same thing. They

said, "We're not going to let you do that." Finally, after a lot of reasoning and threatening to stop pursuing *ST: TNG* for a license, we finally got around that and got some sensible response from them. We also made them feel better by saying, "Look, we're going to treat this with respect. There won't be any shooting unless the ship is fired upon. We're not going to turn them into the Space Pirates from Hell."

SV: *Were the folks at the World Poker Tour pretty open to your ideas?*

SR: They were very open. WPT was one of the easiest licensors to get along with. They have been pretty happy with everything. They have a style guide that we had to follow carefully for the graphics and artwork, but there's a lot of original artwork, too.

SV: *The WPT commentators, Mike Sexton and Vince Van Patten, provide custom speech in the game. What were they like to work with?*

SR: I never met them, but I do know that Chris Granner was very happy with the way they did the speech. I have to say that this is Chris' nicest sound, speech and audio package in years. I'm really happy about that. It's magnificent. He liked working with both of them. Vince Van Patten was definitely the livelier of the two and did some great calls. Mike Sexton was a little more low-key, and he calls the cards carefully. When you pull the plunger, he says things like, "Here comes the flop... Ace, king, ten... Ace high." It's very nice and smooth. When you get things happening like an extra ball or starting multiball, they become much more excited. Courtney Friel has a nice voice, too. People are asking who she is, and she's Shana Hiatt's replacement. You'll start seeing her on the TV show in March. It's kind of unfortunate that the change happened in the middle of the game, but there was no way we could come out with the game with Shana Hiatt on it after she was terminated from the show. That would *not* have been good.

SV: *Did you make a point to watch the World Poker Tour on TV when you started the project?*

SR: Yeah, I watched it quite a few times, and if I pass by it while I'm surfing, I'll watch it again. I'm



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not a poker player, really. I can play, but I'm just not that good at it. However, it became a great challenge to make a fun playfield that involved poker. Texas Hold 'Em is a very interesting and clever game. I like to watch, and it's pretty exciting when they go "all in" and push hundreds of thousands of dollars into the middle of the table!

SV: Did you enlist some people who are poker fans to test it out and get their opinions on it?

SR: Oh, sure. Many people at Stern play poker, and Keith's a poker player. It's as much of a poker-playing pinball machine as a pinball machine can be. I don't think anybody's disappointed about that. It is intelligent and deep, and there are lots of things to find and earn in this game.

SV: Was there any thought in trying to get some of the professional poker players involved with the game?

SR: There was, but I think our market could care less. Whoever we would have picked, there would have been somebody else that people would've wanted to see on the back glass. How do you make the choice of who should be on it? I think what we went with is a better alternative. Pinball has a history of putting pretty ladies on the back glass.

SV: Did you have a lot of problems working with the new hardware system in the game?

SR: Working with an all-new hardware system is always going to be challenging. We're sort of the guinea pig game, no doubt. Keith had to learn a whole new operating system and develop the game at the same time, which was a challenge for him. As for me, I've been scared as hell a few days, but now it seems pretty strong and robust. I'm not too worried. There are many great improvements. The old system used to miss switches. You'd smack into a target and the system would do nothing at times, so it was a great advance to make the switches work every shot. The game will have self-contained multiple foreign languages. If you operate a game in a border town in Texas for instance, you might want English and Spanish in it. The game will hold both of them, and I don't just mean text, I mean speech calls and everything. It's all synched with the same dots, but text on the DMD is in Spanish. And that's true for other languages, too. The system can be updated anytime with a memory stick, and you can download updates off the web and take them to the game. The system also has a huge memory, much more than we ever had before. We can make more of everything: more rules, more dot matrix display effects, more light effects, speech, sound and music with far

better and smoother interactions between each of those components. It makes the game play professional and smooth, and you notice it. The ToPS tournament system is now included in every **World Poker Tour** pin. It's a self-contained system that you can select in the diagnostics, fire it up and **WPT** is instantly ToPS ready.

SV: Do you think **WPT** has taken full advantage of everything the new system has to offer, or is it just the tip of the iceberg?

SR: Well, it's not the tip of the iceberg but we haven't taken it to the edge of the envelope yet, either. We have pushed it for memory, there's no doubt about that, but in the end it'll all fit. I'm sure we'll continue to push the envelope with each new Stern game produces on the system. **WPT** has pushed the envelope of the system on some levels.



SV: You've designed a lot of very popular games over the years. Do you ever feel pressure to top yourself from one game to the next?

SR: Yes, on every game. I think any artist does that. I think that's what you do, you try to do better than the last time and learn from your mistakes. You have to apply yourself very diligently. That's what making a pinball machine is about. You have to have the persistence to stay on it and fix every nuance, and there are hundreds of thousands of nuances.

SV: Do you ever go online and read fans' comments about your games?

SR: Yes, and I listen to everyone. What harm is there in listening to everyone? I watch rec.games.pinball, and I kind of know them and I know

what they're looking for. I also know the insane ones who don't have any idea what kind of business this is. Sometimes somebody can just have an idea, and I'll be like, "Yeah, that is a good idea." Or if they hate something about my game, they'll let me know, and things like that remain with me. I'll consider all input.

SV: What's your opinion on the future of pinball? Will we still be talking about it ten years from now?

SR: I think so. I think there's still going to be a market for pinball ten years from now, and I think Stern will be making them. I have no doubt that pinball has the potential to be a huge phenomenon. I think if the right game comes along, if the right people are interested, if there's the right theme, I think it's very possible for pinball to expand. I think the future of pinball is bright right now. @

Next Month:
Part II with Keith Johnson!

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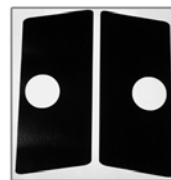
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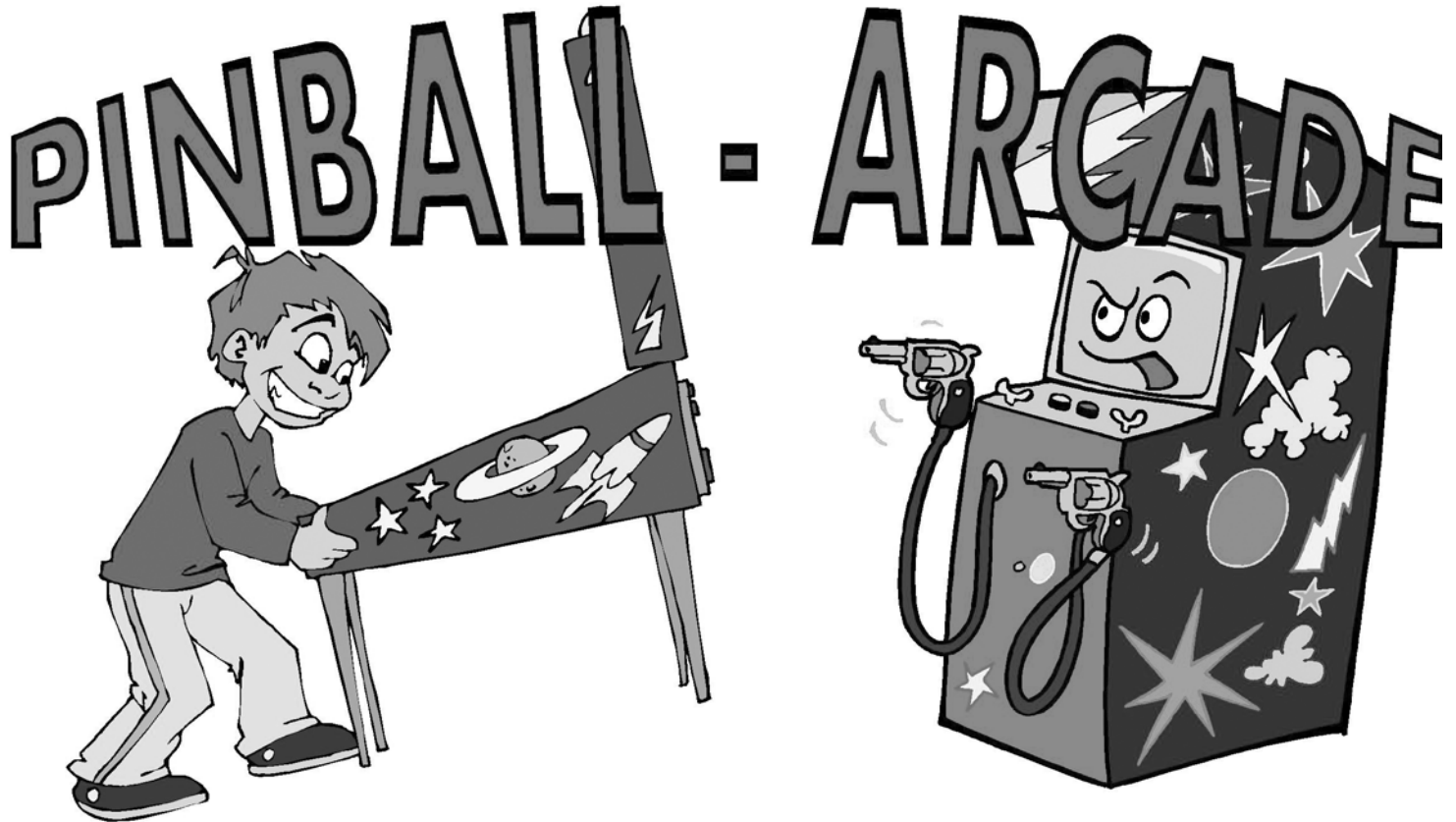
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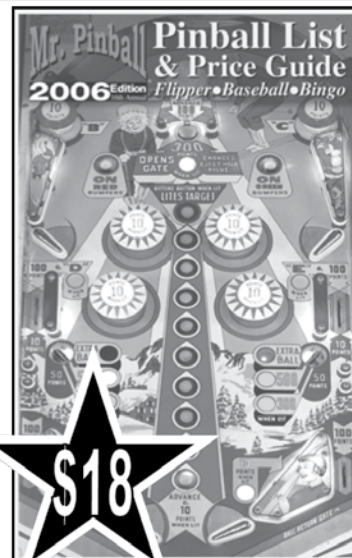
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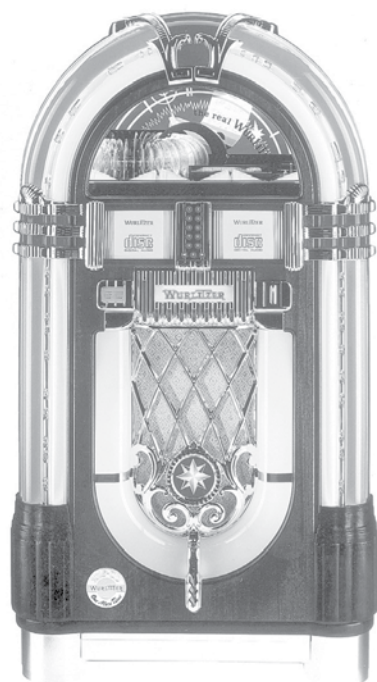
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BILL BICKERS' sound advice

In One Era And Out The Other

Small changes, big changes, no changes at all! That's what lies in the future for me and Jukebox Friday Night. As many of you know, a couple of years ago I bought the jukebox needle business from Ed Saunders. He kept the home/commercial stereo end of the business since that was his primary interest. Then, about a year or so ago he decided to move out of the Atlanta area to Cochran. He liked the laid-back lifestyle and low cost of living down here.

We ended up being scattered among several buildings which doesn't make it easy to do business, and greatly increases the cost. We found that we spent a lot of time just going from one place to another looking for parts, and sometimes not finding them at all. Ed and I are partners in several other ventures and it was becoming difficult to manage all of them by remote control.

So, to make things easier for both of us, we are remodeling the largest building we have to accomodate both of us and everything we do so that it will all be in one place. This is going to be a big help and reduce our costs. We had our offices in one building and the warehouse in the other. A workman is at the larger building as I write this removing walls to expand the available office space.

The larger building has quite a history. It was built around 1890, first used as a livery stable, then a cotton warehouse, and after World War II it was turned into a Kaiser-Frazer automobile dealership! There were two gas pumps out front literally in the middle of the sidewalk. You can still see where the pumps were even though the concrete has been filled in.

There are two large plate glass windows where the cars were displayed. It was later used as a Farm Bureau insurance agency, then an appliance store. After I bought the building a number of years ago, I used it to store unrestored jukeboxes and parts. Now that all the jukes are out and the place is basically empty except for Ed's and my parts, it will be easy to remodel it.

I don't know if you would call this a move since I already had the building and have used it down through the years

anyway, but technically I guess it's a move. I will be doing my amp rebuilding there now, and Ed will have his office in there as well. It just makes sense to reduce overhead and get into a place where we can take care of everything without the constant walking back and forth.

The USPS Numbers Racket

In the middle of all this, our county decided to put in E-911 service, which means that all of our street numbers are changing. It's a darn good thing that this happened in the middle of this rearrangement or I'd have three different addresses, all for the same business! We're going to go ahead and adopt the new mailing address now to save confusion in the future.

Ed and I are seriously expanding our product lines. We'll be carrying everything from home theatre equipment to vinyl LP records, and whatever might fall in between the two. Now we can concentrate on running the business instead of running back and forth across the street, and make great plans for the future.

Which brings me to the point of this column: the new street address that mail and amp shipments will go to is: 105 W Beech St., Cochran, GA 31014. The old address was getting ready to change, so this just saves a lot of confusion. You'll

see the corrected address appear on my website and all my ads. I really haven't moved, but it seems that way.

Sadly, All Of This Comes At A Price

With all the expansion and additions to our businesses, I find that I have very little time left for some of the things that I used to do. Such as this column. I've really enjoyed my writing career through the years; my first column appeared in the December 1997 edition if memory serves. So that's 8 straight years of offering advice and comments to the jukebox hobby. It has been a real hoot and I've made a multitude of friends! But as they say, all good things must come to an



end and this will be my final column. I know that it seems strange that I am quitting at the same time a new owner takes over *GameRoom*, but this only a coincidence. I'd told former publisher Tim Ferrante that I was planning my exit strategy before the magazine's sale was even known to me. *GameRoom*'s sale was a closely guarded transaction and wasn't revealed to any of us until the week before it was to occur. It's just an unusual convergence of circumstances.

I wish everyone the best with the new magazine format, and I would especially like to thank all my loyal readers down through the years. Please be aware that nothing has changed, I still repair amps and electronic selection receivers, provide sound system parts, etc. I will be doing this for many years to come. It's just that I've ended up working sometimes seven days a week and now I need to divert what little free time I have to expanding my business.

And for those of you who don't know, I sell capacitor kits, tubes and tube kits, and many other repair parts in my eBay store. My eBay user ID is [electricstories](#), look at the 140 or so items I have listed. There just might be something in your jukebox could use!

This has been a tough decision, but it will allow me a little free time that I really could use. Thank you all for your support and I extend my sincerest wishes to Kevin Steele for a prosperous publishing business! @

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A well known collector/dealer sold his collection of 47 jukeboxes, 12 speakers and numerous slot machines and arcade pieces on September 24-25 in a 2,100-lot auction in PA. If you missed this auction we'll have the results for you in our November issue.

Two Kansas City Collectors had their collections sell at an auction Nov. 5th. 20 jukeboxes, 16 wall boxes & 10 speakers sold. If you missed this auction we'll have the results for you in our December issue.

One of our long-time advertisers (a jukebox parts dealer) has announced that he is taking some time off and has closed his business till Jan. 1st, 2006.

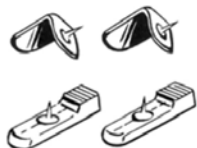
We are running an ad for a large auction to be held on the week-end of March 18, 2006. It says- "We will have some rare and original outstanding collectibles and maybe even a few - one of a kinds so mark this date on your calendar and let us know if you want to add some qualified pieces."

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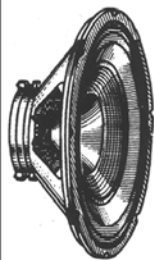
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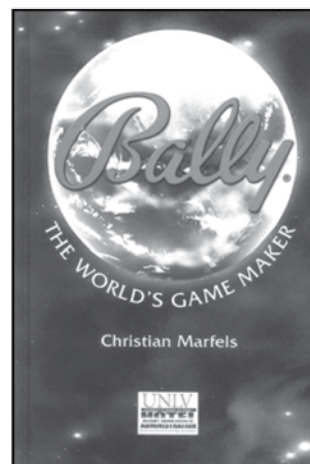
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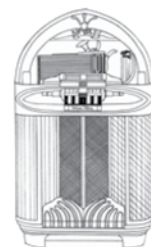
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Glenn Strope's BLUE MOON Jukebox Banter And In The End ...

From the Blue Moon Jukebox world headquarters located in the heart of downtown Apalachin, New York, I bring you another edition of Blue Moon Jukebox Banter. This a very special installment which I'll begin as I did in 1998. To those of you who are charter readers, you may experience a case of *deja vu* all over again.

"In the forthcoming months I hope to present a column on collectible jukeboxes that just might breed or renew interest into the wonderful world of jukebox collecting. My intention is to present information in a humorous and low-tech format. I have no intention to compete with some of my esteemed colleagues such as Harold ("Dr. Know It All") Hagen, Bill Bickers and the like. You may even go so far as to call this column "Dr. For Sure I Don't Know It All". Topics will include:

"How I Paid Way To Much For My First Jukebox", "So You Want To Turn Your Hobby Into a Business", "The Ten Dumbest Questions I Ever Got Asked From the Internet", "How To Buy a Jukebox at a Coin Op Show", record reviews and other timely topics. I am also hoping for a dialog from new and old subscribers. No question is too stupid for this column. Ladies and Gentlemen this is 'Jukeboxes for Dummies'."

The above was my opening salvo in what would be my seven and a half year contribution to **GameRoom** magazine.

For it was back then when a gentleman (?) by the name of Tim Ferrante convinced me that I should become a monthly voice in this magazine. Titles such as Blue Moon's JukeLand, Blue Moon's Jukebox Hijinks, Blue Moon's Juke-Scope were "bantered" about until it was mutually agreed to become what is now known as Blue Moon's Jukebox Banter. Over the next 70-plus issues I've spun a web of jukebox tales for which, dare I suggest, there remain no peers! Coin-op show reports from Hackensack, Chicago and Philadelphia, jukebox tech tips, 45rpm record picks, reader compilations of the worst and best 45 records ever made, stories of jukebox successes and failures, contests, your jukebox rants and raves and, of course, an ongoing medley of lighthearted abuse and intimidation between Mr. Ferrante and myself. They've all served to keep you entertained. However, just like *Seinfeld*, Bonomo Turkish Taffy and the world one day, all good things must come to an



end. This, dear friends, will be my final installment of Blue Moon Jukebox Banter. And please, let not your tearful eyes interrupt your reading.

What You Didn't Know ... Because We Never Told You!

In all honesty, I have tendered my resignation several times over the past few years, but Tim always cajoled me into hanging in for a few more months ... a few more months ... a few more months. And you may recall that last year I cut back this column's frequency to bi-monthly as did Bill Bickers. The handwriting was on the wall for both of us. Nevertheless, my

main writing goal was to be fresh and witty and I often felt I was somewhat lacking in both areas. In that regard I must take my hat off to one of the finest publishers I have ever had the privilege to work with (and the only one I ever worked with!). Tim's encouragement and input were a vital part of what you read every month. Many times the column I submitted was edited and embellished into something that I even looked forward to reading every month. So to "Timmy" I say congratulations for a good run (and if you need any help getting to the bank please feel

free to give me a call.)

One thing I would like to make very, very clear. My leaving is in no way related to the recent sale of *GameRoom*. It would be easy for you to blame my departure on that event, but I submitted my "it's for real this time, Tim" resignation while he was still keeping the sale under secrecy. It's the truth, he and Kevin Steele were negotiating and finalizing matters unbeknownst to all of us. They didn't reveal anything to anyone until shortly before it was to occur. My main reason for leaving is that I've decided to try and turn my business back into a hobby. This is as a result of an opportunity I've been given to go back into the business world on a full time basis with a guaranteed pay check, paid vacations, work and stress-free days off and the job security that the jukebox business just does not provide. I will continue to do restorations



and repairs, but will work to scale it back to where it gets to be fun again. My first love has always been my jukeboxes, but the stress of making a profit has taken some of the fun out of it. My goal over the next few years is to start making a few more machines for myself.

I could not find a bill. All I could find was a note from Glenn wishing me a Merry Christmas. This is a true story! Tim, I hope you realize you have one hell of a friend in Glenn. I appreciate you and all the other hobbyists who keep the amusement industry thriving. Sincerely, John Field

The love you take ...

It has never been "all about the jukes." For me it's been "all about the people." Tim received the following email and forwarded it to me. I'm including it here as it is an example of what I strived for with everyone.

*Dear Tim: Well, I have to admit that I was "bowled over" after receiving the December 2005 issue that had the picture of Namco's **Rockin' Bowl-O-Rama** on the cover! That is one of the coolest arcade machines that I have ever seen. I showed my friends at the local bowling alley and they flipped! Never have seen the 1991 version of **Bowl-O-Rama**. Last year was a great year for amusements at my home because I finally entrapped your old nemesis to restore my wasted AMi **Continental**. Yeah, that guy. The one with the many aliases, Blue Moon, Duke, Duke of Juke or Master. What an excellent piece of work (the **Continental**), when Glenn (only his good friends call him that) finished with that juke. I met the Duke in Maryland to pick up the masterpiece and he proceeded to let me buy him breakfast. Glenn enthralled me with super-sized stories of The Beatles, records and how he once lived in Kansas! Yawn. My 12-hour trip back to Pocahontas, Illinois never felt so good. Blue Moon was also enticed by me to work on an AMi auxiliary speaker, an eBay bargain which I turned over to him. To my astonishment I received the shipped, fixed speaker along with a beautiful jukebox book! I looked in the box and*

In all honesty, I have tendered my resignation several times over the past few years, but Tim always cajoled me into hanging in for a few more months...

... Is equal to the love you make

To new publisher Kevin Steele and his staff, I give to you my undying support. New faces and fresh ideas will certainly give *GameRoom* a different look and feel. And who knows, I just might turn up as a guest once in a while.

Finally, a very grateful "thank you" to you, my loyal reader who always expressed your appreciation at various shows and swaps. It has been enormous fun. Long live Rock and Roll, the King (Paul McCartney) 50s **Seeburgs**, AMi **Continentials**, the Ferrante clan, the Stropes and *GameRoom* magazine.

"Glenn has left the building."

Epilog: Over the years many of you believed that the antagonizing barbs I threw into Glenn's columns were genuine. I know this because of comments made to me during phone calls and through emails. Well, the fact is that my caustic remarks were there purely for your and our entertainment. There were several instances where Glenn and myself would concoct some phony disagreement or other confrontation simply to raise reader eyebrows. None of it was ever as a result of our being at odds with one another. Glenn has always been a trusted friend and I will miss his wonderful sense of humor and our written horseplay.
- Tim Ferrante

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As the cold days of winter come to a close, many of us are starting feeling akin to our old friend, the groundhog. Yes and like that infamous predictor, I too can see the future: it's you and you're calling me, you want something, but what? Lottery picks! No, that's not it. Is it the pass code to your ATM card? No, but we're getting close. It...it must be....Jukebox parts? Yes, of course, it's jukebox parts, I knew it all along, I was just testing you (?). Maybe I've spent too many months in my burrow? But not sleeping — I've been busy, busy sorting parts, hundreds and thousands of little tiny pieces. Sorting and sorting...maybe too much sorting? Yes, maybe too much sorting, after all it is March and high time to invite the gang over for some wearin' o' the green, ice cold beers, and plenty of good olde rowdy behavior (think of it as an extended football season!). Come on now, when's the next time you'll get a legit chance like this? The work Christmas party? New Years? Nonsense, it's St Pats and now's the time. So party-on Garth, pass the Alka-Seltzer and if all else fails try to keep your head out of toilet. Remember, when you need jukebox parts or futures told, it's Durfee Coin-op, I'm here to help you son.

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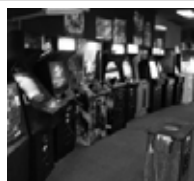
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Miss Bowling (Sirmo)
Miss Universe
Mystic Gate
New Orleans (Sirmo)
Night Club
Orient
Palm Beach
Palm Springs
Shoot-a-Line
Six Shots (Biros)
Spot Lite
Stock Market
Sun Valley
Super 7
Ticker Tape
Variety
Yacht Club
Zodiac

JUKEBOXES

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Rowe Ami R87
Rowe Ami R90
Seeburg Entertainer
Seeburg Laser Music
Seeburg Disco

OTHER

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Inter-Active Heckler's
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Herb Silvers' Fabulous Fantasies

GAME ROOM OF THE MONTH

by Dave Ellis

This has to be Dave Ellis' month – not only does he have a brand new column debuting in this issue of GameRoom ("The Wayback Machine, page 36), but his gameroom is also this month's GameRoom of the Month! Dave has an impressive collection of video arcade games and unique vector-themed ceiling artwork that would be perfectly at home in any 1980's-era arcade. Congrats, Dave! — Herb

I've already related the sordid details of my coin-op addiction (January, 2005), so *GameRoom* readers have some insight into how I got into the hobby and amassed the game collection that has taken over my life. Some time has passed since I wrote my confession, so I figured I'd drop in for another visit and show you what I've done with the place since then.

Like so many coin-op collectors, my collection has always been relegated to the garage. In my case, it's purely a spatial (rather than a spousal) issue. Homes in North Carolina generally don't have basements, and there's simply no other place to put as many games as I own!



When my collection hit maximum size, the garage certainly looked a lot like an arcade to the casual observer—but it was still really just a garage full of games. So, in December 2004, I spent the week between Christmas and New Years converting my garage into a proper gameroom.



Before I could do anything I had to move the games. My neighbor was kind enough to let me use his garage as a storage facility for a week. Moving 13 arcade video games—even when it's just across the street—is quite a task. And, believe me, it's a task that I have no desire to repeat any time soon.

After some minor drywall work, the first step in the renovation process was priming and painting. I used plain white Kilz primer, and Behr satin black paint. It took two coats of paint to cover the walls and ceiling. I also painted all of the storage cabinets so they'd blend in.

Next came the floor. I debated long and hard over whether to use carpeting or to simply paint the floor. In the end, I decided on the latter. A couple of coats of concrete paint gave me a nice black floor that doesn't contribute

to static electricity and allows me to move the games easily as needed.

After the paint fumes cleared, it was time for the fun details. Using one-inch painter's tape, I taped off the shapes of familiar video game graphics throughout the room. I originally set out to recreate images from a variety of raster and vector games, but in the end I stuck to vector games only—it was a lot easier, and required less painting skill. After nearly a day's work, scenes from *Asteroids*, *Space Wars*, *Lunar Lander*, and *Star Castle* were spread across the ceiling and wall-mounted storage cabinets.

Even though I've managed to hide most of my junk in cabinets or move it to the shed outside, the garage still has to function as a storage space and I still have several open storage shelves on the walls for the stuff that's too big to fit in the enclosed cabinets. I mounted these shelves above the garage door tracks, and hid them cheaply and effectively using black fabric. The stretchable fabric is stapled to wood strips mounted on the ceiling. It is then stretched down under the edge of the shelves where it attaches along the bottom front edge with a long strip of Velcro. With the lights off, it is nearly impossible to see that the shelves even exist!

Next, I went to work on the lighting. I mounted blue rope light around the entire perimeter of the room. On the ceiling, I installed two six-inch plasma disks, one to represent the star between the painted *Space Wars* ships, and one to serve as the

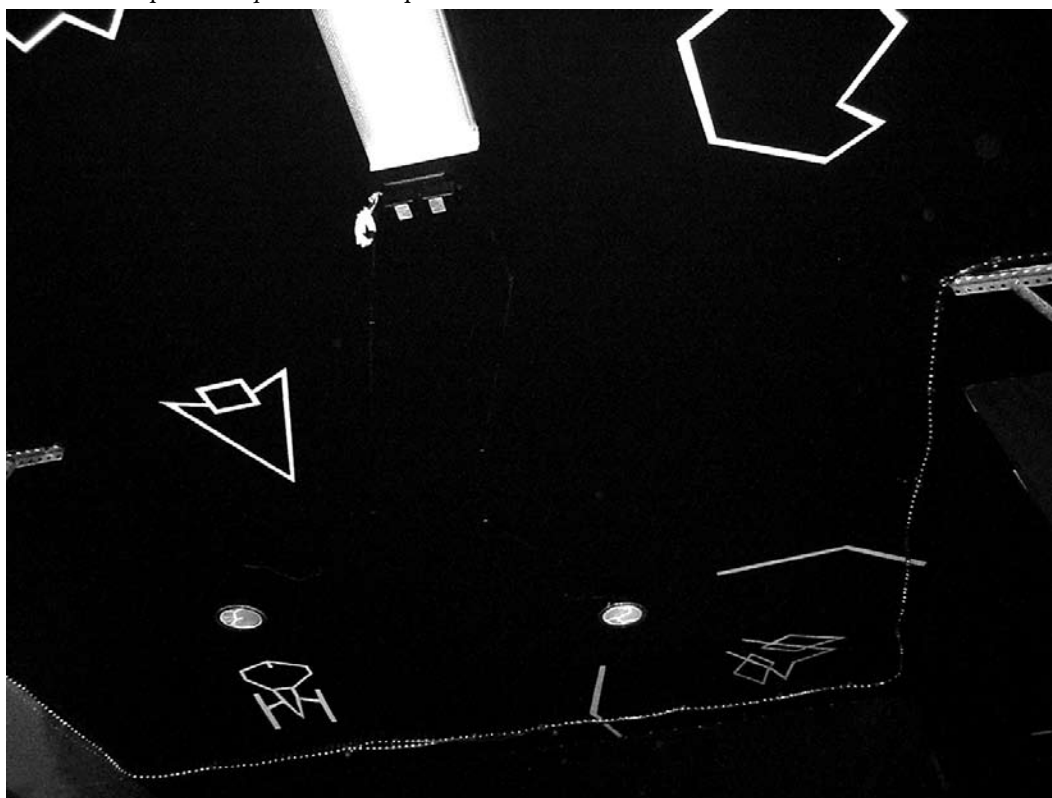


Star Castle ship's projectile. The final lighting touches were a clock trimmed out in blue neon and a neon "Game Room" sign (just in case there was any doubt to the casual observer as to what the purpose of this room was).

As for additional art, one wall is covered by a 12 x 8 *X-COM* *Interceptor* display from the 1998 E3 show in Atlanta. (*X-COM Interceptor* was the first PC game I designed for *MicroProse* as lead designer.) On the opposite wall, I hung framed *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* posters. Each poster was signed at the Classic Gaming Expo in 2001 by Don Bluth and all of the other members of the teams who created those games.

One of my fondest arcade memories from the 80s was watching music videos on a laserdisc video jukebox at *Gadgets*, a restaurant/arcade in Towson, Maryland. I have no room for a proper video jukebox, but I came up with an idea to simulate the experience to some extent. I mounted a 13-inch monitor and a DVD player on the wall. Now, whenever the arcade is up and running, I play a non-stop selection of 80s videos on DVD. (A surprisingly large number of 80s music video DVDs are available at Amazon.com.)

To keep the room nice and dark, I replaced the old white mini-blinds with gloss-black



(ordered on the Internet because black is apparently not a popular color with the Wal-Mart and Target crowds). To hide the garage door, I hung some inexpensive black fabric from the shelves above.

Last but not least, I moved the games back in. I desperately wanted to rearrange the machines to hide as much of the remaining "garage-ness" of the room as I could, but I was at a loss as to what I could do. There just wasn't any room. My wife came up with the ultimate solution—block the garage door (which we seldom use anyway). The final arrangement really works. Just in case, I put the game cabinets with built-in wheels in front of the door for those rare occasions when I do need to use it—like when I bring in more games.

I estimated that my arcade makeover would take me about three days. It ended up taking seven. Even so, the final results are very satisfying. The christening party in early January was a rousing success, and all of my visitors thus far really appreciate and enjoy my little homage to the arcades of the 80s.

(You can follow the progress of my gameroom at www.davesclassicc arcade.com)

See more photos of Dave's
gameroom in full color!

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Click on "Gameroom Gallery"

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[gam4sale.html](#)

Pachinko (Nishigin, Sankyo,...)

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Chicago Coin TURFCLUB

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Gottlieb: GLADIATORS, STREET FIGHTER 2, BRONCO, BANK-A-BALL

DE/Stern: LEATHAL WEAPON 3, JURRASIC PARK, PLAYBOY 35th ANNIVERSARY, FLIGHT 2000

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John :#)#

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GameRoom News

Compiled by
James McGovern



Welcome to the first installment of *GameRoom News*, a brand-new feature in which we try highlight the month's unique coin-op-related news.

As you read this month's installment, remember that the news you read here next month may well be based on your input and notification. We would love to hear from you over the course of the coming years as you hear about items worthy of recognition in the pages of *GameRoom Magazine*.

So let us know if you are aware of new products hitting the coin-op collector market, know of an upcoming event your fellow collector's may be interested in, or if you have the inside scoop on other juicy industry news. *GameRoom* has always been and continues to be a community-driven publication and without your help it's just a stack of paper with pretty pictures.

I look forward to hearing from everyone in the *GameRoom* family in the years to come and will strive to present you each month with the very best in coin-op insider news!

— James McGovern

RetroBlast Merges With GameRoom



As nearly all *GameRoom* subscribers now know, Kevin Steele has purchased *GameRoom* magazine from pinball and coin-op aficionado Tim Ferrante.

Kevin Steele has made his mark in the community with his good work on the *RetroBlast Retrogaming News and Reviews* website over recent years. *RetroBlast* was the product of Kevin's own desire to write about his experiences

while building his "MAMEFrame" PC-driven arcade cabinet.

Today *RetroBlast* continues in the original focus of being a site that reviews products used by the home arcade collector and builder. The site also plays host to articles and reviews from other contributors who write about a wide range of arcade and pinball related subjects including building and restoration tutorials, interviews with industry notables, videogame and pinball book reviews, as well as software reviews.

You can check out *RetroBlast* online at: <http://www.retroblast.com>

Tim Arnold Opens the Pinball Hall of Fame Museum in Las Vegas, Nevada



Veteran collector Tim Arnold finally realized his dream of creating a living museum dedicated to the wonderful world of pinball on January 13th, 2006, when the Pinball Hall of Fame Museum opened its doors to the public in a pre-grand opening test run. The museum opened at partial capacity with approximately 125 games installed and others were still being moved into the location.

On January 27th of 2006 the museum officially opened at full strength, with nearly 175 pinball and other amusement machines in operation that span over five decades of pinball and coin-op history.

Visitors are welcome to not only view the cavalcade of pinball machines, but also encouraged to play the reconditioned

devices in the 4500 sq/ft facility. The older machines are set at \$0.25 per play while some newer models take \$0.50 per game.

Congratulations to Tim on realizing his dream and bringing pinball back into the Las Vegas limelight. Great job and we wish you the best in this incredible endeavor!

The museum is located in Las Vegas Nevada, just a silver ball's throw away from the main Vegas strip at 3330 E. Tropicana, Las Vegas NV 89121 and is open from 11AM to 11PM, 7 days a week.



You can find out more information about the Pinball Hall of Fame including the list of games you will find on location at the current website:

<http://www.pinballmuseum.org>

KLOV Founder Assumes Operations at VAPS.org

As early as 1990, the Video Arcade Preservation Society founded by Steve Ozdemir has been populated by video arcade collectors who wished to communicate with fellow enthusiasts and show off their respective arcade collections. According to the Internet Wayback Machine, the original incarnation of a VAPS database was an unofficial list maintained by Rick Shieve.

Since 1995, the society met the information age along with the reported roster of 200 members and 1300 games and developed into an online database detailing who had what and the condition of the items.

In recent years, the database and the website have been sadly lingering in a state of disrepair. Classic videogame collectors have often complained that their entries were lost, logins would not work, and many simply stopped keeping the information up to date.

It would appear that Greg McLemore, the man behind the Killer List of Video Games (KLOV) as well as International Arcade Museum (IAM), has jumped in to help the site's founder, Kevin Ruddy.

According to a message posted by Greg McLemore on the KLOV / IAM forums, as of January 23rd the VAPS site is undergoing a major upgrade. The entire Perl backend is being gutted and rebuilt in order to address the myriad of problems reported by users.

Greg has also asked that anyone who would like to be a part of this worthy endeavor to please contact him using the KLOV forums.

I look forward to seeing how this effort works out. Greg has been an incredible asset to me through the KLOV site and I hope upon hope he can breathe new life into the ailing resource.



International Arcade Museum:
<http://www.arcade-museum.com>

The Killer List of Videogames:
<http://www.klov.com>

The Internet Archives:
<http://www.archive.org/index.php>

North American Pinball Parts Alliance

Pinball restoration enthusiasts rejoice! In recent months there has been no small amount of wailing and gnashing of teeth due to the confusion over the licensing issues with reproduction pinball parts. In response to this confusion and the outcry by collectors for increased parts availability, four players in the collector market have stepped up to form the North American Pinball Parts Alliance, to be known as NAPPA.

Here is the official press release announcing the alliance as penned by Gene Cunningham of the Illinois Pinball Company:

Pinball Enthusiasts,

*Illinois Pin Ball Company is pleased to announce that the companies listed below have come together to form a strategic alliance. This alliance will be known as the **NORTH AMERICAN PINBALL PARTS ALLIANCE. (NAPPA)***

The purpose of this alliance is for several companies to work in unison to bring pinball parts to market. It is our belief that by working together we will accomplish much more than we can by working separately. By utilizing the expertise of several companies and the vast resources of IPB, together we can bring parts to market at a faster rate and with the same high quality standards that have come to be expected by the collector market.

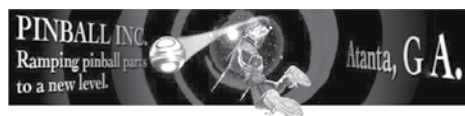
Below is a list of the NAPPA partners:

Illinois Pin Ball Company

Gene Cunningham
Illinois Pin Ball Company
<http://www.illinoispinball.com>



Darin Jacobs
Phoenix Arcade
<http://www.phoenixarcade.com>



James Loflin
Pinball, Incorporated
<http://www.pinballinc.com>



Kerry Stair
Mantis Amusements
<http://www.mantisamusements.com>

These alliance partners working together in a warm spirit of total cooperation will shortly bring a vast number of new parts as well as many parts that had licensing issues to market.

I'd like to thank our customers and our NAPPA partners for their continued support and cooperation.

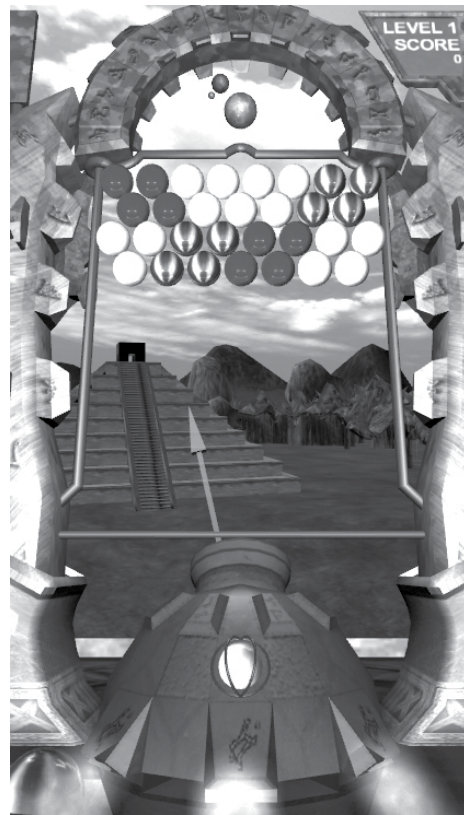
Gene
Illinois Pin Ball Company

Digital Pinball Headed to North America



Ready or not, the first commercial digital pinball tables are headed to North America from manufacturer, TAB Austria. The machines will be distributed in North America by the Canadian firm SML Entertainment.

The tables all have the same form factor, but different games can be loaded into the tables to suit the location and client.



Above: Digital Pinball's "Bubbles" game

Initially, it is reported that there will be five games for the tables: Pirates of the Sea, Crazy Marbles, Air Commander, Bubbles, and Popstar. Reports are that the games will cost \$5 to play 3 games.

Uh.....tell me why I would want to play this thing again?

Time will tell whether or not the gain a foothold, but until that price goes down I am going to be pretty hesitant to try it out.



You can see more images of the tables and the games as well as download flyers at TAB Austria:

<http://www.tab.at/TABUE/Photos/index.html>

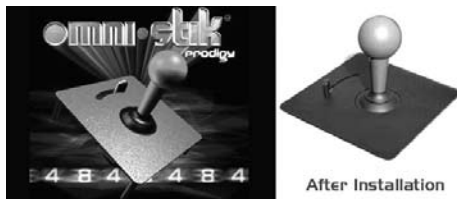
Randy Turner's Groovy LED Blitz



Randy Turner and his company, *Groovy Game Gear*, may be a new blip for some on the coin-op collector radar, but the custom arcade game builder community have come to recognize his groovy logo and innovative custom arcade products.

Randy was one of the first to address the call by the community to develop an inexpensive keyboard encoder, used to transmit signals from an arcade panel through a PC and onto the screen of a PC driven arcade system with the Eco-Wiz encoder.

Randy also released one of the first 4-way to 8-way joystick switching solutions, which allowed a player to do so from the top of a custom panel with his OMNI-Stik Prodigy™ Joystick.



As of late Randy has clearly lost his groovy little mind and seems committed to releasing about one new product every 12 hours. Very recently in late December of 2005 he announced the release of the Opti-Wiz™ spinner and trackball encoder.

Since then he has executed a blitz of sorts with products that allow custom builders to employ LEDs in their control panels. The first such product is the LED-Wiz™ logic controller which can power an array of LEDs and instruct them to do their groovy little dance in preset or programmable patterns.



Builders soon saw the release of a new LED product called the RGB-Drive™ Pushbutton Lighting Module. The module is the platform on which the LED is mounted and is intended to simplify the bottom mounting and wiring of an RGB LED. Randy says that when this module is used with the LED-Wiz™ users can instruct the LED to illuminate in one of over 100,000 colors.



To complete the package, he has just released a new pushbutton brand called Electric ICE™. The buttons are made of a highly translucent white material and have a pre-drilled hole in the base of the unit that is designed to accept the LED of your choice and just happens to ac-

cept an RGB-Drive™ Pushbutton Lighting Module. Now that was lucky!



Check out Groovy Game Gear's line of unique arcade products at:
<http://groovygamegear.com>

QuarterArcade.com Purchases Arcade Renovations

Anthony Pietrak at QuarterArcade.com recently announced the purchase of the Arcade Renovations arcade artwork website and inventory. QuarterArcade.com specializes in the procurement, renovation, and resale of classic videogames for the discriminating video arcade game collector. Here is what Anthony had to say about the recent acquisition:

QuarterArcade.com is proud to announce that it has recently purchased the inventory and website of Arcade Renovations. Arcade Renovations will continue to operate as it has since its founding in 2001, providing professionally screen printed arcade artwork and game parts to the collecting community. We have already begun expanding our product selection, including adding monitors, more artwork, etc.

QuarterArcade.com is a leading provider of professionally restored classic arcade games and original arcade game parts. We carry over 75 classic arcade games along with over 2,000 unique, original game parts, including circuit boards, Jamma adapters, manuals, marquees, monitor bezels and much more. Visit our website: www.QuarterArcade.com for a full, real-time listing of games and game parts.

Thanks for your continued support, Anthony Pietrak

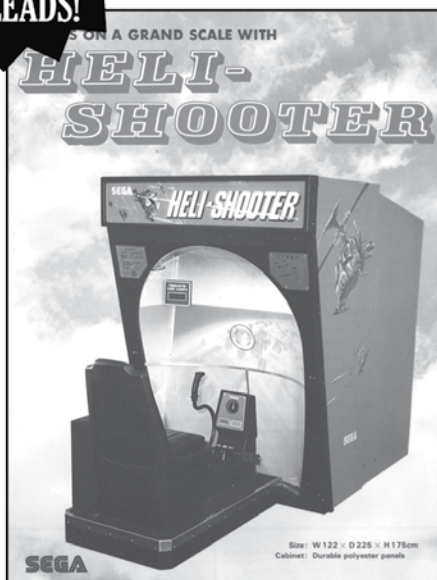
www.ArcadeRenovations.com
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The WAYBACK Machine

by David Ellis



I'm a fan of Jethro Tull. I think their songs have a lot of interesting things to say. One line, in particular, comes to mind every time I ignore my pile of Xbox games and head into the garage to play a few classic coin-ops in my home arcade:

"Oh, we won't give in; let's go living in the past."

To my knowledge, Ian Anderson isn't a coin-op collector, but with a philosophy like that, he could be.

I suppose introductions are in order. I'm David Ellis—confessed coin-op addict (*GameRoom*, January, 2005), video game designer (in the industry since 1992), and author (16 published titles, including *The Official Price Guide to Classic Video Games*, Random House, 2004).

Like a lot of avid *GameRoom* readers, I grew up playing coin-op machines and classic console video games. I am part of what I like to think of as the first-generation of video gamers. From the time I was introduced to the world of pinball at age seven, any quarter I ever had in my pocket didn't stay there for long. I can still remember the first time I laid my hands on a coin-op video game—Atari's *Breakout* at the local bowling lanes. Maybe it's overstating things to say "my life was changed forever" when I started bouncing that square ball off of those monochrome blocks, but it definitely had a lasting impact.

I followed the growth of the coin-op (and home) video game industry as a player, from that day in 1974 right through the late 1980s. I watched as coin-op video games went from being something you'd find wedged between the pinball machines in pool halls, to mainstream fixtures that were commonplace items in every convenience store, deli, and pizza shop.

Of course, that was only the tip of the iceberg. Full-blown arcades were everywhere in the 80s, too. There were several shopping malls in my area, and every one of them had an arcade. Every strip mall had an arcade. Every hotel had an arcade. Restaurants were built around arcades—Nolan

Bushnell's Chuck E. Cheese, of course, and a bevy of Chuck E. Cheese wannabes in towns across the country. My college had an arcade—with over 50 video games (15 pool tables and 8 bowling lanes, too—needless to say my college expenses were significantly increased by hanging out there).

Arcades became social Meccas for the popular and socially inept alike. The biggest treat for me every year was to check out the newest video game releases at the arcades in Ocean City, Maryland on my family vacation every year. They always seemed to get the newest games first. The local arcades got my quarters the other 51 weeks of the year. It was quite the ritual. Evenings after work, on the way home from school, entire Saturdays—all spent at the local arcades. My wife, who is just seven years my junior, finds it fascinating that there was a time when people would plan an entire day around a trip to an arcade but, at the time, it was second nature.

What a wild ride.

If you've stuck with me so far in this introductory column, you might be asking, "What's the point? Is he just going to reminisce for a page and a half?"

Well, yeah. That actually *is* the point. But don't worry—I promise not to reminisce about my life in the arcades of the 80s in future columns. Not much, anyway.

People have lots of reasons for becoming coin-op collectors. For me, there are a lot of reasons. The games are still fun to play—more fun for me than most contemporary games, actually. Then there's that sense of accomplishment that comes from taking a beat-up, dead coin-op machine and restoring it back to its former arcade glory. And I definitely take more than a little satisfaction in the fact most people who visit my house think it's pretty cool—in a geeky sort of way—that I have a fully-stocked retro-arcade in my garage.

But, more than any of that, I collect to capture a little piece of the past. It's not just that stepping into my arcade is like stepping into 1985 (which it is)—it's that the history of coin-op games is fascinating to me.

Every month *The Wayback Machine* will take you back to a moment in coin-op history, moments that shaped the history of the coin-op games we love to collect.

Consider the video game industry. A mere forty years ago, there was no such thing as a video game, let alone a coin-operated one. Apart from a few experimental games created by students and visionaries at colleges and labs across the country, nobody really gave much thought to using televisions and computers for anything other than watching sitcoms and westerns or churning through calculations (respectively).

Then, in 1971, Nolan Bushnell—a visionary fellow who was familiar with the amusement and coin-op industries—decided to make a coin-operated version of a computer game that had fascinated him during his college years. Bushnell recreated Steve Russell's *Spacewar* concept—two ships flying through space on a video screen and shooting at each other—and designed economical hardware to run the game on a small black and white television set. The resulting game, *Computer Space*, was far from a hit, but it was a true milestone in coin-op history. Bushnell doesn't get the credit for inventing video games—that honor goes to Ralph Baer, whose Magnavox Odyssey was the pioneer product in the home video game market. But *Computer Space* was the first coin-operated video game.

The industry really got rolling a year later, when Bushnell's newly-formed company Atari released *Pong*. From the moment it was test marketed in a local bar—Andy Capp's in Sunnyvale, California—*Pong* was the kind of hit that *Computer Space* could never hope to be. Simple and elegant in design, the game started turning the heads of coin-op junkies everywhere. Now, when you had a few quarters to blow, pinball wasn't the only game in the house.

For the first couple of years, copies and variations of *Pong* were the best the fledgling coin-op video game industry had to offer. Then, some new ideas started trickling in—some of which had their roots in the electromechanical games of the 60s. Midway's *Gunfight* (1975) hearkened back to any number of EM shooting games, and *Sea Wolf* (1976) was a video game copy of Sega's *Periscope*—an enormous electromechanical beast that took up a lot more space to play the same basic game of torpedoing enemy ships.

It is generally agreed that the phenomenon now known fondly as the Golden Age of video games began in 1978, when Taito released *Space Invaders*. The game is rumored to have caused a coin shortage in Japan. Although it had no discernable affect on the availability of our currency here in the US, there was no doubt that *Space Invaders* was a hit.

Space Invaders also sparked creativity in other manufacturers. The hits of the late 70s ranged from innovative sports

games (Atari's *Football*); space shoot-em-ups (Cinematronics' *Space Wars*, which was a huge hit despite the fact that *Computer Space* had been coolly received by the public just seven years earlier); and the rock-blasting sensation *Asteroids* that surpassed *Space Invaders* as the most popular coin-op arcade game in 1979.

As the decade of the 80s began, coin-op video games got better by leaps and bounds. Original game ideas abounded in that era in a way that they haven't since. *Space Invader*-like shooters remained popular and evolved, but they were joined by new genres: maze games (*Pac-Man*); platform games (*Donkey Kong*); player-versus-player fighting games (*Warrior* and *Karate Champ*); and bird-mounted jousting games (*Joust*—okay, that's not really a genre.)

Features evolved at a phenomenal pace. Stereo sound replaced mono. Arcades cranked up the sound, and even plugged huge stereo speakers into *Gyruss* to blast Bach throughout

the room. Color replaced black-and-white. In 1979, there wasn't a single color video game to be found. By 1983, there were games with full-color, cel animated cartoons for graphics. It seemed like every time you walked into an arcade, there was something new to catch the player's ear or eye.

It seemed for a while there that arcades would continue to grow and flourish thanks to the coin-op video game boom. There was no end in sight.

For a while.

Part of the thing that makes coin-op video game history so fascinating is the way that its popularity ultimately led to its downfall. When video games in the arcades snowballed in popularity, the home video game industry—which had been pumping out *Pong*-clone consoles on

and off throughout the 70s—was making strides toward bringing the arcade video game experience home.

It wasn't possible to recreate the graphics and sounds of arcade games, simple as they were, on home consoles at the time. But that didn't stop companies like Atari and Mattel from trying. The Atari Video Computer System (2600) and Mattel's Intellivision provided platforms for game manufacturers to create home versions of popular arcade games. This led to a slow but steady shift from coin-op to home video games. It looked like that wouldn't matter, though. In 1983 and 1984, the insanely profitable home video game industry crashed, and it looked like the whole thing had been the fad that some had predicted it was. The arcades survived the crash, interestingly enough, although the observant video gamers noticed a trend toward conversion games rather than new cabinets, and a lack



Photo courtesy of Dan Hower

of truly creative new titles. Still, the arcades looked like they had survived.

That wouldn't last. By the end of the 80s, the home video game market was back with a vengeance. The Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) was selling like crazy and providing players with graphics and sound that easily rivaled most of the coin-op games of that decade. The arcades started closing down, and the coin-op video game industry finally entered a state of dormancy that has lasted to this day. Apart from a few stand-out hits in the 90s and beyond, the era of memorable coin-op video games became a thing of the past.

Of course, you can't really tell the story of coin-op video games in a single magazine column, let alone a few paragraphs. But anyone can see that there is a great deal of history and lots of great stories packed into this little swatch of coin-op history.

Partly because I grew up around coin-op games and partly because I'm a game designer myself, I find myself thinking a lot about the games I collect. Who designed them and how did they come up with their ideas? What's the story behind them? How did the video game industry move from two paddles and a square ball to life-like, photorealistic 3D in a mere three decades? What happened to the arcades? Why did the American pinball industry dwindle from nearly a dozen manufacturers to one over the course of about 20 years? These are the questions that really fascinate me. I read every industry-related book I can get my hands on. But it's never enough.

So much history. So many stories. It's time those stories were told.

That, fellow collectors, is why I'm here.

Every month, *The Wayback Machine* will take you back to a moment in coin-op history—not broad, sweeping topics like the one I covered this time, but very specific moments that shaped the history of the coin-op games we love to collect. In future columns, you can look forward to interviews with game designers and other key people who made the classic coin-op era great; profiles of classic video and pinball games and the companies that made them; and discussions of industry issues that affected the coin-op world and made the industry what it is—or isn't—today.

I look forward to sharing a bit of coin-op history with you every month. Whether you learn some little tidbit of trivia from these windows into past or they simply stir fond memories of a simpler time, I think I'll have done what I'm setting out to do.

As collectors, all of us are living in the past...at least some of the time. And that's just fine. When we're tinkering with our latest coin-op treasures—and while you're reading (and I'm writing) this column every month—it's okay to put the present on hold for a while. Eventually, we're all yanked back to the problems in our everyday lives. But, until that happens, we won't give in.

We'll keep living in the past. @



Videogames: In The Beginning

Ralph Baer, the meticulous note and record keeper, brings forth the tonnage of evidence which crowns him as the "Father of Video Games." In fact, he knows the precise day video games were born! And he can prove it and does so in the pages of this absolutely fascinating book. Baer is an electronics design engineer and inventor and it was during his days at Sanders Associates in Nashua, New Hampshire when he put pencil to paper. How his "eureka moment", as he describes it, got from a yellow pad into the homes of America is something even a Hollywood screen scribe couldn't predict. This book is a keepsake for those who grew up during the formative days of video games. Ralph Baer has given us a definitive accounting of who did what and backs it all up with photographic proof. *Videogames: In The Beginning* has a 3000 copy press run so order yours today before the shelves go Baer.

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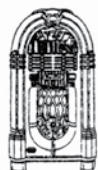
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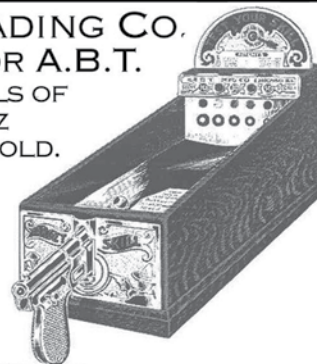
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You Have Got to Be Kidding!

by Kevin Steele



Sega's "OshareMajo Love & Berry" Mashes Dress-Up and Dance Offs Into a Weird and Wonderful Game for Japanese Girls

As an arcade gaming aficionado, I just have to love the Japanese. Not only is their arcade scene alive and thriving and they continue to create new arcade games, they are also responsible for some of the most unique and, well, *weird* games ever invented.

Take, for example, one of the hottest games among young Japanese girls: Sega's *OshareMajo Love and Berry*, released in October of 2004. A weird mash-up of dress-up and dance-off, OshareMajo has girls first dressing their surrogate characters ("Love" or "Berry") in the latest chic attire, then competing in a "dance-off" to finally decide once and for all who's the hippest and hottest chick around.

Dance Dance Dress Up

Osharemajo means "Fashion Witches." The game centers on two of these girl fashion witches, Love (the cute one) and Berry (the cool one). Pick from one of available venues for the dance off (such as a ball or disco), dress appropriately, and then dance (and look) the best to win the game. Dancing is accomplished by hitting large buttons in time to the music.

This child-sized arcade game allows you to add new clothing, hairstyles, and accessories via special scan cards that can be purchased for about \$.75 each. Swipe the card through the scanner, and your onscreen surrogate gets to wear that piece of swag. Basically, you're combining card playing games such as *Pokemon* with an arcade game: get the right power card and you're that much more "stylish."

You've got to love a game where a character's power is measured by style points. I'm not quite sure how this game



measures how hip you are and which clothing styles are cooler than others, but then again, I've never had a firm grip on style to begin with. It fascinates me that they've somehow managed to quantize fashion into a scoring system.

When You're Big in Japan...

Apparently, OshareMajo is a major hit in Japan among young pre-teen girls. Not only are there hundreds of "fashion power" cards available (Sega releases card sets every few months, such as the "2005 Spring and Summer Collection"), but there are also card collecting cases, dolls, noodle cups, and other OshareMajo-related merchandise readily available for sale. Girls collect their OshareMajo fashion cards, then play high-tech dress up...to win.

Don't think that this is just a polite little playtime for girls, either. They mean business, and it is a truly competitive game. Weekend competitions have started springing up all over Japan, and the frenzy over new card releases among pre-teen girls brings a new level of meaning to "gotta get 'em all."

Battle of the Barbies?

In case you're wondering, there is actually a similar game for young boys, entitled *Mushiking* (King of the Beetles). In this game you use collectible cards to choose skills and attack moves for your favorite bug, then battle it out for domination of the insect kingdom. It's a bit weird, but at least my male brain can wrap itself around the concept.



Love and Berry, on the other hand, makes little sense to me. This game takes everything that our culture finds wrong about how girls are indoctrinated, being taught to value appearance and popularity above all else, and creates the perfect storm of superficial commercialism. I mean, c'mon — a game that rewards you for looking the coolest in the latest styles and dancing better than the other girls? Just what is the message here — what sort of whacked-out gaming goals are these?

While I readily admit that a little girl might find all of this very cool, I have to wonder if this is the right way to bring females into videogaming. If a first person shooter (FPS) can be considered a "murder simulator," then what is this game — A Fashion Diva Trainer? Did Tyra Banks get her start like this? Can you become a teen dancing sensation by learning synchronized button pushing?

Now granted, the game is non-violent and there's not a pool of blood and body parts left over when you win the final "battle," but is this game really teaching anything better? That if you look cooler and dance better than everyone else you're a winner?

I guess I'm going to have to chalk this difference of opinion up to a bit of a divide between Japanese and American cultures, and a huge divide between male and female minds. While I find this game a bit disturbing, obviously it's a big hit in Japan. And quite honestly, is Barbie any less plastic and superficial? Beauty is, after all, only skin deep. @

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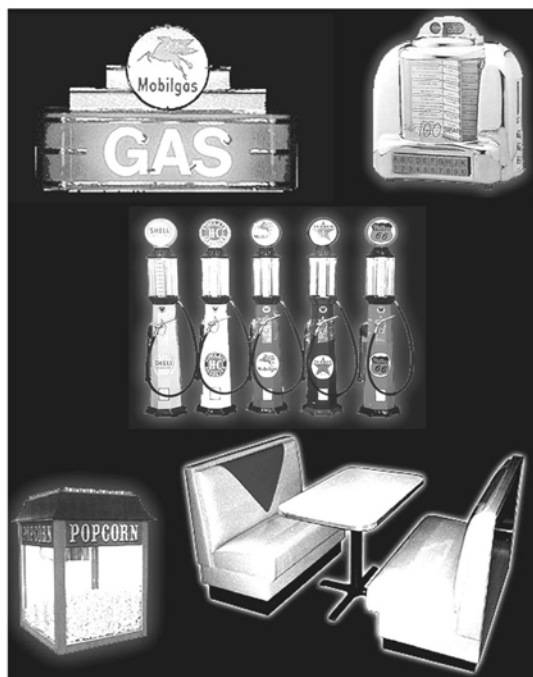
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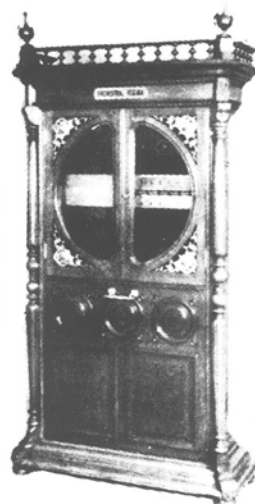
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Confessions of a Coin-Op Addict

by Barbara Roth

Fifty-five years is a long time for an addiction, and our addiction to pinball is at least that long or longer. Of course my husband and I didn't know each other back then, but as youngsters we both loved playing pinball games.

Dave's grandfather, a barber, always had one or two games in his shop that were great to play. Dave's dad, a great pinball player too, often would take him to a local hangout where he was put up on a stool so that he could reach the game. Dorney Park in Allentown, Pennsylvania was a great place during the 1950's to play pinball and other great coin-op games. They also had great old hand-crank movie machines. We both loved it there. When Dave was in the Air Force in the late 1950's, he often played the 25-hole pinball gambling games. In college in the early 1960's he played *Flipper Parade* and *Sweethearts* at the Campus Shop.

I started playing pinball Saturday nights at a local restaurant. My dad, a physician, loved the games as much as I did. My mother would order for us and hold the table while my father, brother and I would play *Marble Queen*. My dad bought us a machine for our rec room at home. It was a Gottlieb *Queen of Hearts*. The machine was broken down more than it actually worked, but we loved it anyway.

Dave and I were married in 1961 and talked about buying a machine for ourselves for the next thirty years. We still kept playing every chance we got. There was a steak sandwich shop in our town call Chips that always had one or two games to play. We had great times playing *Silver Ball* and *High Speed*. For years we talked about getting a pinball machine for ourselves but never got around to doing it. Sometime in 1992,



Subjects' Names:

David and Barbara Roth

Occupation: Retired

1st Addiction:

Probably 55 years ago, so it's hard to remember which game.

1st Pins Owned:

Black Hole and Amazon Hunt

a friend gave us the name of Cricket Amusements, owned by Bill Lewis. We couldn't believe all the different pinball machines that he had for sale. After playing one machine after the other for hours, we finally settled on a *Black Hole* and an *Amazon Hunt*. Several months later we asked him to find us an *Addams Family*. He did and has found us over twenty different machines since through the years. We like machines that can be restored to like-new condition. Dave is super with the electronics and will paint and cut stencils if he must. The only really bad mishap he had with a pinball was with the Champagne Edition of *Fire*. He ruined the playfield trying to peel off the mylar. This the first time he came in contact with Steve Young of Pinball Resource (see ad on page 4), who was able to supply a new playfield.

Right now we own about twenty pinball machines, one *Red White and Blue* slot machine, and a poker machine. We have given our son, who lives in Kentucky, seven pinball games. Last year we moved into a new house built to accommodate the large collection. While we admire older pinball machines for their magnificent back glasses, we collect mostly newer games for their better gameplay.

Our older games include *Mata Hari*, *Gauche*, *Mibs*, *Spiderman*, *Old Chicago*, *Power Play*, *Big Hit*, and *Seashore* (unrestored). Some of the newer games are *Medieval Madness*, *Addams Family*, *Indiana Jones*, *Scared Stiff*, *Road Show*, and



Theater of Magic. We are true collectors and rarely sell any machines. We did recently sell a second *Theater of Magic*, *Twilight Zone* and a *Fish Tales*. Our newest game is Stern's *Lord of the Rings*.

The pinball machines are played all the time, and I am almost as good a player as my husband so we have our own contests. Our family and friends also enjoy the games. @

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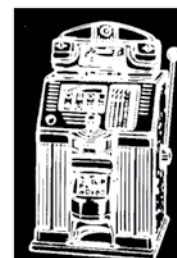
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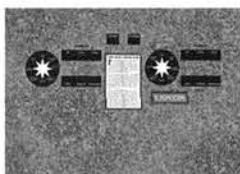


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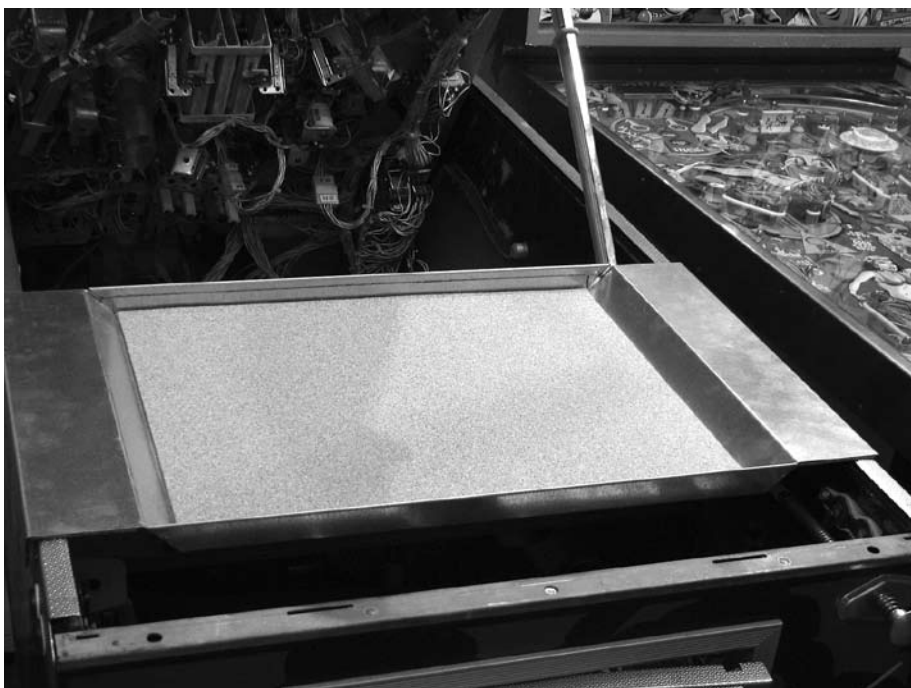
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Whether it's your first pinball machine repair or your hundredth, you want repairs to be finished as quickly as possible so you can get back to playing pinball. If your game room is as cramped for workspace as mine is, making efficient repairs can be a challenge at times. Most repairs seem to take twice as long as they need to and I spend an inordinate amount of time trying to find a place to hold the parts and equipment needed to complete the repair and still have my tools within handy reach. Here comes the *PinPan* to the rescue.

The PinPan is designed to be a portable work surface and storage container for use while working on a pinball machine. Any time I work on the underside of a playfield, I find myself using the PinPan in a variety of ways as an all-in-one portable workbench, spot to attach a light, container to hold parts, and a platform for my soldering station for "in place" soldering work.

The PinPan workstation rests on a pinball machine's side rails either with the playfield raised or in the normal position. The center of the PinPan is a recessed area that sits down into the pinball machine. The front and back sides of the PinPan



are squared off and the two sides slope at a 45-degree angle. This keeps tools from rolling off the PinPan and falling into the cabinet. The PinPan is 14 inches wide, one inch deep, and 26 inches wide. It is designed to fit any pin from the standard 23" width up to 26" widebodies. I have used the PinPan on a variety of widebody machines such as *Haunted House* and standard machines like *Xenon* and the PinPan works well on both standard and widebody machines. As long as your pinball collection does not consist entirely of ultra-widebody machines like Bally's *Embryon*, the PinPan will work just fine on your machines.



When I first started using the PinPan, I had two potential concerns. It is a testament to how well the PinPan has been designed that both concerns proved to be unfounded. The first concern was regarding how sturdy the PinPan would prove to be when being used. The pan is very lightweight and flexes slightly when you handle it, but once you insert the pan into a machine, the PinPan "snaps" into place and becomes very rigid and sturdy. The PinPan is solid enough that I have placed a soldering station, several solenoids, assorted wrenches, and a voltmeter on the pan while completing a repair and there was no sign of bending or flexing from the pan.

My other concern was the metal on metal contact of the PinPan and the side rails of a pinball machine scratching the side rails of

my machine. The designer of the PinPan obviously thought about this potential scratching problem as well. Any area of the PinPan that touches your machine is covered with cork to prevent scratches. In addition, the recessed work area of the PinPan is covered in cork.

I consider the PinPan a very good buy for the price. You might be able to cobble together a similar work area for less money, but not one as lightweight and durable with the same attractive design. With the PinPan, you truly get what you pay for. The PinPan is Union-made in America from 24 gauge galvanized sheet metal and is machine cut and bent into shape with spot welds in the corners. Built to withstand the rigors of constant use, the PinPan is a repair tool with staying power.
— *Steve Biroshik*

Reel History

a photographic history of slot machines

by David N. Mead

Photography by David N. Mead and Daniel R. Mead

Published by Mead Publishing

\$39.95, available from GameRoom Magazine

www.gameroommagazine.com

Reel History is many things: a slot reference guide, pictorial history of slot machines, and a son's tribute to his father, all rolled up into one handy book. A work of art over twenty-five years in the making, *Reel History* is an amazing collection of slot machine photographs, covering 436 machines from over 76 different manufacturers.

Photographed by both David N. Mead and his late father Daniel R. Mead (the publisher of *Loose Change* magazine), *Reel History* is an amazing collection of slot machine photographs. The publication originally began life as "*The Great Big Picture Book of Slot Machines*," but during the lengthy development process the collection slowly morphed from what would have been a prohibitively expensive coffee book into a smaller (8.5" x 5.5"), inexpensive visual slot reference guide designed to be a companion to Mead Publishing's *Loose Change Slot Machine Blue Book Price Guide*.

The black and white photographs in the book cover various slots from the turn of the century up to the seventies. Each is beautifully photographed, and you can almost feel the years of history fly by as you flip through the pages. There are some truly unique and surprising slot designs in the book — it's impressive to see how many different guises the "One-armed Bandit" has taken over the years.

If you're looking for an extensive history of each machine, you won't find it here — the information provided for each machine photographed is limited to the manufacturer, type of slot machine, year produced, and any nicknames the slot may have gone by. Still, it's an impressive collection of photographs, and is sure to be an invaluable field reference for the slot collector who's trying to identify that "gem in the rough" that they've just discovered stashed away in someone's old woodshed. — *Kevin Steele*



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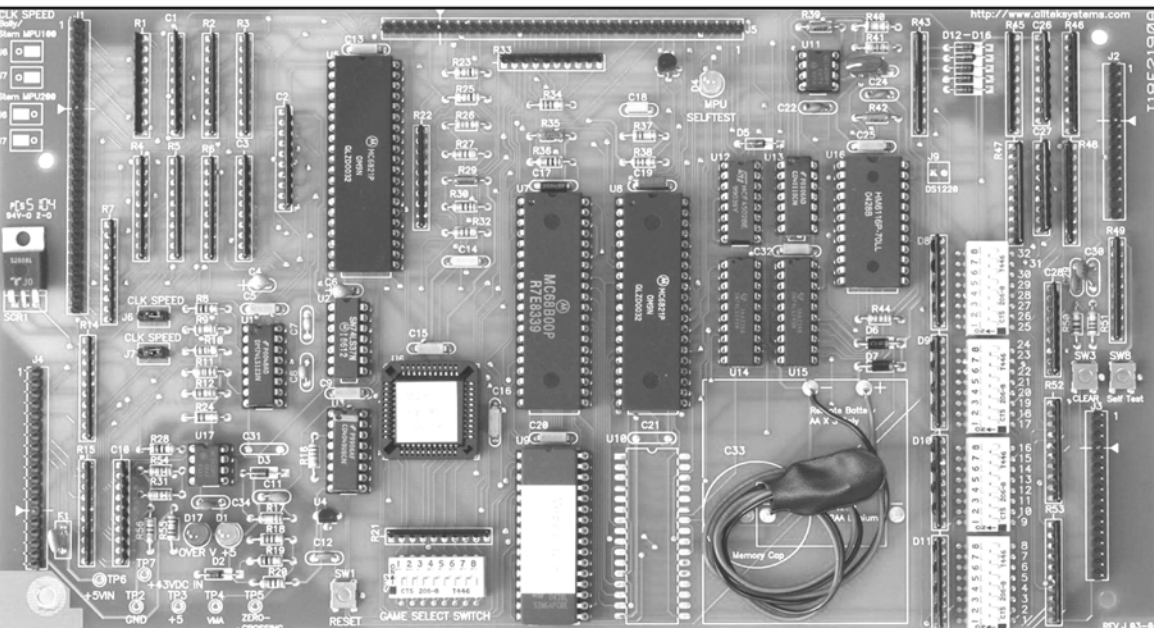
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Auction Watch

by Tim Ferrante and Scott Voisin

It's been a long time since I first learned about the law of supply and demand in school, but I got a quick refresher this past January, courtesy of eBay.

My beloved football team, the Pittsburgh Steelers, had moved into the last spot in the playoffs, and they faced an uphill battle in their pursuit of the world championship. As much as I've enjoyed Steelers football over the years, I never really collected any kind of memorabilia. Once they began their playoff run, my pride began to swell and I started looking for things I could display to demonstrate my support.

My first thought was trading cards. While not flashy or grandiose, they were small enough so I could fit a lot on one shelf without sacrificing too much space. I went on eBay and looked up Troy Polamalu, the Steelers' dynamic defensive dynamo. I found two listings for his limited edition rookie card, and \$40 later, I owned one. Then I found a single listing for a card of future Hall-of-Famer Jerome Bettis, for which I shelled out thirty-five bucks. My collection was up and running but my bank account was off and limping.

Three weeks later, after the Steelers won their final playoff game to earn a trip to the Super Bowl, I decided to check eBay again. Much to my surprise, when I entered Troy Polamalu's name this time, there were 20 of his rookie cards available. The same card I had purchased for \$40 was now selling for over \$140. And Jerome Bettis? The card I spent \$35 on was now fetching greenbacks north of \$150.

The Steelers had officially become the hottest thing in sports and consequently on eBay. Alert sellers, knowing when to strike while the market was hot, began offering anything and everything with the Steelers logo on it. Now, conventional wisdom dictates that when the supply is filled, the demand drops. But not in this case; the supply had increased, but it still wasn't enough to sate fans' appetites. If an item's price got too high, you couldn't put off waiting for the next one because there was no guarantee the price wouldn't go even higher.

All in all, I'd spent around \$250 for a collection of cards that, in three weeks time, was now selling for over \$800. Of course, the prices of sports collectibles are notoriously volatile. Some people would have probably sold all the cards at that point and walked away with a tidy profit, but I wasn't in this for the money. I wanted to assemble a collection representing a team of players who were on the verge of achieving greatness.

As I write this, it's been less than 12 hours since the Steelers won Super Bowl XL, and their place in history has been secured. EBay is still jumping with all kinds of Steelers memorabilia, only now the sellers have been able to add the magic money words "world champions" to their listings. As for my cards, the prices keep going up. Ten years from now I might be lucky to get half of what I paid for them. Not that I'd ever sell them ... What I have is a constant reminder of a rare and special time when my favorite team was on top of the world.

To me, that's priceless. — Scott Voisin



Coin-Op Auction Results (Compiled from eBay®)

Amazing Sales

Miss America bingo pinball (1957) \$1510
Black Knight pinball \$1495, \$1300
Chicago Coin Hollywood pinball \$1200
Rock-Ola Dial-A-Tune wallbox \$687
Atari War Final Assault (linked pair) \$1999
"Derby" Confection Gumball Vender \$2800
Chicago Coin Midget Skee Ball \$12,900
Gottlieb Freddy Nightmare/Elm Street manual \$61

Pinball

Mystery Castle \$2675
Tales of the Arabian Nights \$3000
KISS \$2750, \$2495
Fun House \$2550
Harley-Davidson (Bally) \$2475
Diner \$1931
Jokerz! \$1803
Jurassic Park \$1749
Capt. Fantastic \$1625
Black Knight 2000 \$1370
The Machine \$1322
Big Brave \$1075
Lost World (Bally) \$1075
Checkpoint \$901
Dolphin \$895
Truck Stop \$1025
Breakshot \$1008
Nightmare/Elm Street \$1026
F-14 Tomcat \$830
Medieval Madness \$5500
The Addams Family \$3395
Star Wars Trilogy \$3350
Scared Stiff \$3176
Twilight Zone \$2877

Jukeboxes

Wurlitzer 1015 (original) \$7500
Seeburg 161 \$2801
Rock-Ola 1428 \$2500
Seeburg 222 \$2704
Seeburg R \$2995
Seeburg G \$1825
NSM Silver City (CD) \$975
Rock-Ola JR40 countertop \$1475

Video Games

Silent Scope EX \$3000
MoCap Boxing \$2500
Q*Bert \$1025
Outrunners 2-player \$1450
X-Men 6-player \$1200
Star Castle \$1051
Area 51 \$800

Mortal Kombat 3 \$950
Galaga \$905
Robotron 2084 \$835
Wing War 2-player \$800
Megatouch 7000 \$725

Gumball Machines

Victor Topper \$189
Victor Baby Grand \$200
Bluebird 1-2-3 \$750
Columbus Model A \$366
Adams Chiclets wallmount \$315
Northwestern 39 \$200
Spiral "Gas Pump" \$352

Soda Machines

Coke Vendo 110 \$1225
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Coke Cavalier 96 \$5995
Coke Cavalier 72 \$2025
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Coke Vendo 44 \$2800
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Pepsi 56 \$2025

Slot Machines

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Buckley Criss Cross \$1476
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Garfield the Cat kiddie ride \$700
Rock-Ola Hold & Draw trade stimulator \$575

Paper

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Xenon pinball flyer \$76
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Sharpe's Pinball! book (soft) \$93



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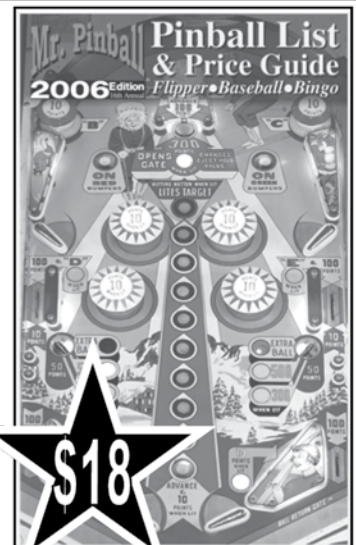
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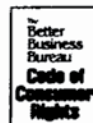
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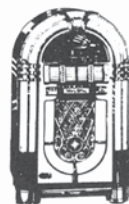
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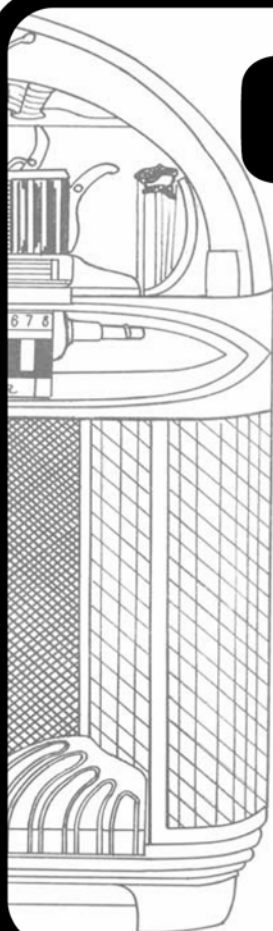
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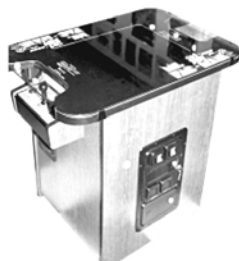
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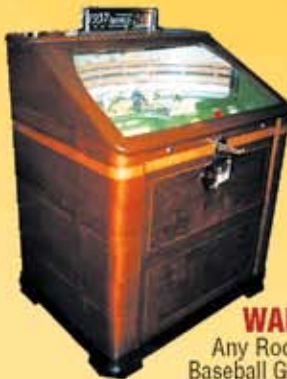
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