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After three long years of preparations, the Illinois Video Gaming Act that was signed into law in July 2009 is becoming a reality. With it comes progress, economic impact, and some challenges too.

70 In Step with AAMA

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On the cover

Play Meter caught up with the Firestone Financial team to discuss its current offerings, corporate strategy, and how, in direct contradiction to other lenders, Firestone is taking a proactive approach to fuel industry growth.

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BONNIE THEARD
Editor

We want to hear from you about any of the articles in this issue or topics you'd like to see.
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was talking to an industry friend recently and we both commented on the new generation of operators. This industry is mainly composed of family enterprises, with multiple generations coming to the fore and taking the reins of the companies. Sometimes entire families, parents and siblings, are all involved in the business.

It seems like it was not long ago that I saw the upcoming new generation at trade events with their parents: Jim Stansfield's daughter Julie (Stansfield Vending) as a willowy teen at a Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators Association (WAMO) state show; John Neville's son Jim (Blackhawk Music Co.), a tall red-headed teen at a national show.

In writing about the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association (ICMOA) State Meeting, I see more familiar names. I met Danny Rowell of Action Amusement at an ICMOA meeting and now his son Jason is Secretary of ICMOA. I did a 60-second interview at a trade show with Mike Gelatka of Mike's Amusement, who joined his son Kevin in a seminar presentation at the ICMOA meeting.

This month's Coinman, Conrad Storz IV of Storz Distributing Inc. in Jeffersonville, Ind., is someone I have talked with at many shows. I just found out in the interview that his grandfather started the company in 1946 and the business has remained in the family for 66 years into the fourth generation. Conrad works with his brother Joe; their dad, Conrad III, often comes by the office and remains active in the Indiana Amusement and Music Operators Association (IAMOA). Conrad's son Douglas has also joined the company.

Play Meter's Operator of the Year 2011, Dale Lazar of H. Lazar & Son Inc., is a third generation operator. He said he continues to follow the practices established by his dad, Bernie: "genuine customer engagement, treating all employees as family members, a commitment to operational excellence and professionalism, and philanthropic activities."

Play Meter's Operator of the Year 2010, Rick LaFleur of I.F. LaFleur & Son, is also a third generation operator who works with his brother Boyd. Their dad, Izzy, comes to the office every day. LaFleur said, "Our family bond is the part of our business that I really most appreciate."

In both In Memory articles this month I see more families dedicated to the industry. We lost two of our senior members in June: Nolan Estopinal and Russell Dougherty. Estopinal built Chalmette Amusement over three decades and his son Troy is now at the helm. Dougherty owned and operated Rapids Coin Machine Service for 30 years; his son Scott is following in his dad's footsteps with D&D Amusement Games LLC.

There are so many family names with rich histories in the industry, far too many to mention here. It's comforting to know that 1) each generation brings its own skill sets and talents to the table, moving the industry forward, 2) the work ethic of the parents has been instilled in the adult children, 3) the love for this industry endures, and 4) the future of the industry is assured through the many family businesses that make up the coin-op community. ▲

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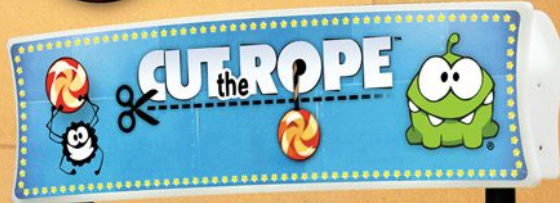
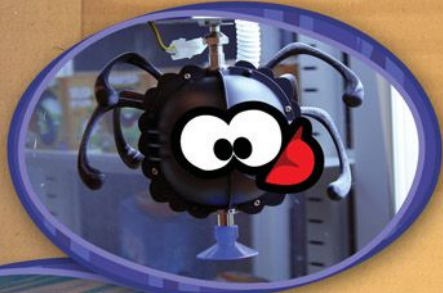


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Nolan Estopinal

Nolan Joseph Estopinal, Founder of Chalmette Amusement in Chalmette, La., a U.S. Army veteran, passed away on June 18 after a valiant battle with cancer; he was 78. He was able to visit with family and friends on Father's Day, June 17.

Nolan is survived by his wife of 56 years, Sylvia; sons, Gary and Troy; daughter, Michelle; brothers, Lionel and Roger; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. He was known for his work ethic and devotion to family.

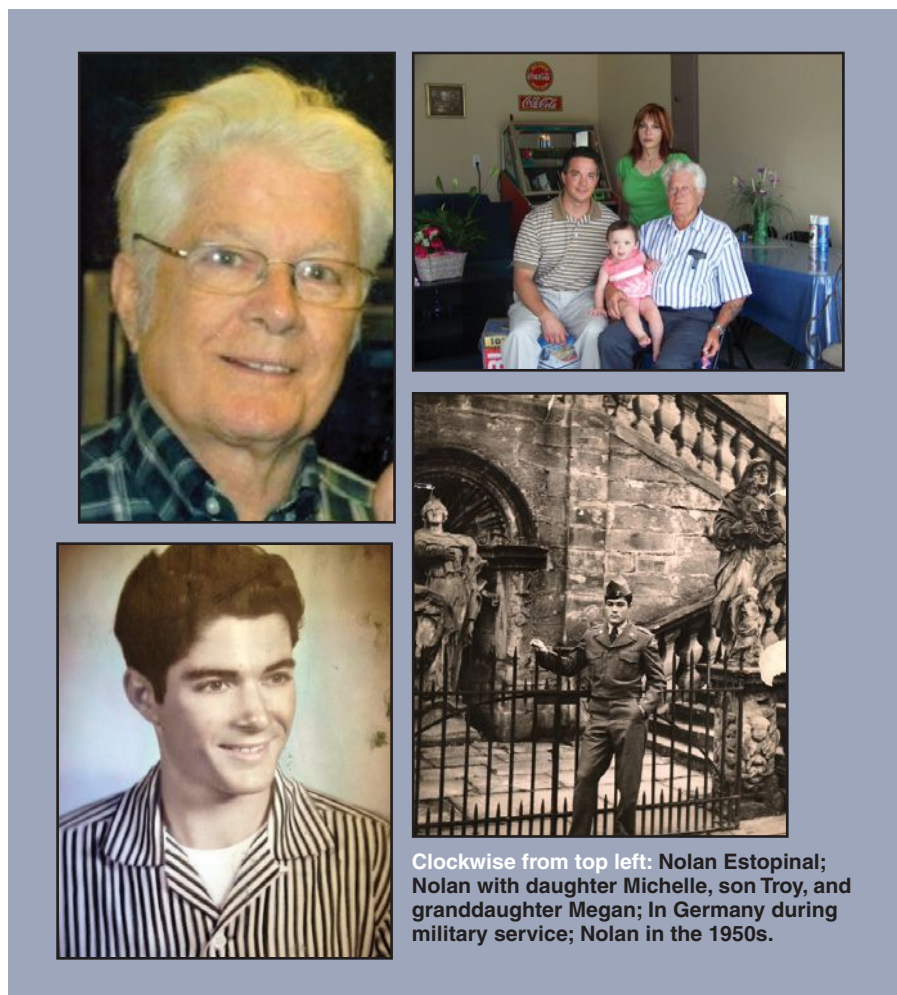
Nolan began his coin-op career in 1960 as a route man, then as a game repair technician. He began Chalmette Amusement in the early 1980s placing games in a travel park; his wife was his bookkeeper. As he told *Play Meter* in a Coinman Interview with his son Troy in September 2000, "From there, it just started rolling."

He followed a philosophy of starting at the bottom, working your way up, and earning respect. In the interview he also said, "My philosophy includes a belief that if you help your locations they will help you."

Jim Pietrangelo, a Past President of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA), said, "I remember being introduced to Nolan in the early '80s. He was one of those guys you just couldn't help but like right away. To this day, when I think of Nolan, the first thing to come to mind is his ever present smile as he thrust out his hand for you to shake."

"He was a hard worker, honest as the day is long—someone whose word was his bond and for whom a handshake was as good as any contract. He raised a wonderful family and was very proud of that fact. Sadly, our industry has lost yet another very good man."

Greg Young of Town & Country Amusement Co. in Baton Rouge, La.,



Clockwise from top left: Nolan Estopinal; Nolan with daughter Michelle, son Troy, and granddaughter Megan; In Germany during military service; Nolan in the 1950s.

said, "It must have been some time in the '80s when I met Nolan. I remember we used to sit together at new product introductions at AMA Distributors. He was one of the 'real operators.' I immediately felt comfortable around him. I enjoyed his quick wit, quick temper, and his laughter. It became apparent during those events that Nolan was the kind of guy that had no hidden agenda; he enjoyed the amusement business and it showed."

"Nolan and his wife built Chalmette Amusement from the ground up with hard work and determination. He was one of those operators who are the cornerstone of the industry. He worked day and night providing his customers with the machines and dependable service they needed."

Young continued, "During the time immediately following Hurricane Katrina, Nolan spent a good deal of time in the Baton Rouge area. Even though he lost everything it did not seem to dampen his spirits. A few years earlier, two of his children, Michelle and Troy,

had joined the business, and it was obvious to me that he had instilled his hard work ethic in them as well.

"After the storm, they picked up what few pieces were left and achieved the monumental task of building the business back stronger than ever. Those two children continue to run a very successful Chalmette Amusement to this day. Nolan had indeed built a company that would outlast his lifetime. I know that made Nolan very proud. I will miss him."

Eric Saia of Algiers Music in Jefferson, La., said, "Nolan was always helpful to me and my brother. Our companies had a close relationship and we looked out for each other. Nolan was someone who was always there when you needed him. He was one of the nicest people I've ever met; a very straightforward guy and extremely honest. He will be sorely missed."

Memorials may be made in his name to: Children's Hospital, 200 Henry Clay Ave., New Orleans, LA 70118. ▲

Russell Dougherty

Russell “Russ” Joseph Dougherty of Kissimmee, Fla., formerly of Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., passed away June 4 at Pine Ridge Assisted Living under the care of Ministry Home Care Hospice. He was 87.

Russ served in the U.S. Navy during World War II from 1942 to 1946. When he returned from military service he worked for Herb Tonnell, who started Cigarette Service in Appleton, Wis. In 1955 he struck out on his own and purchased Rapids Coin Machine Service in Wisconsin Rapids, which he owned and operated for 30 years.

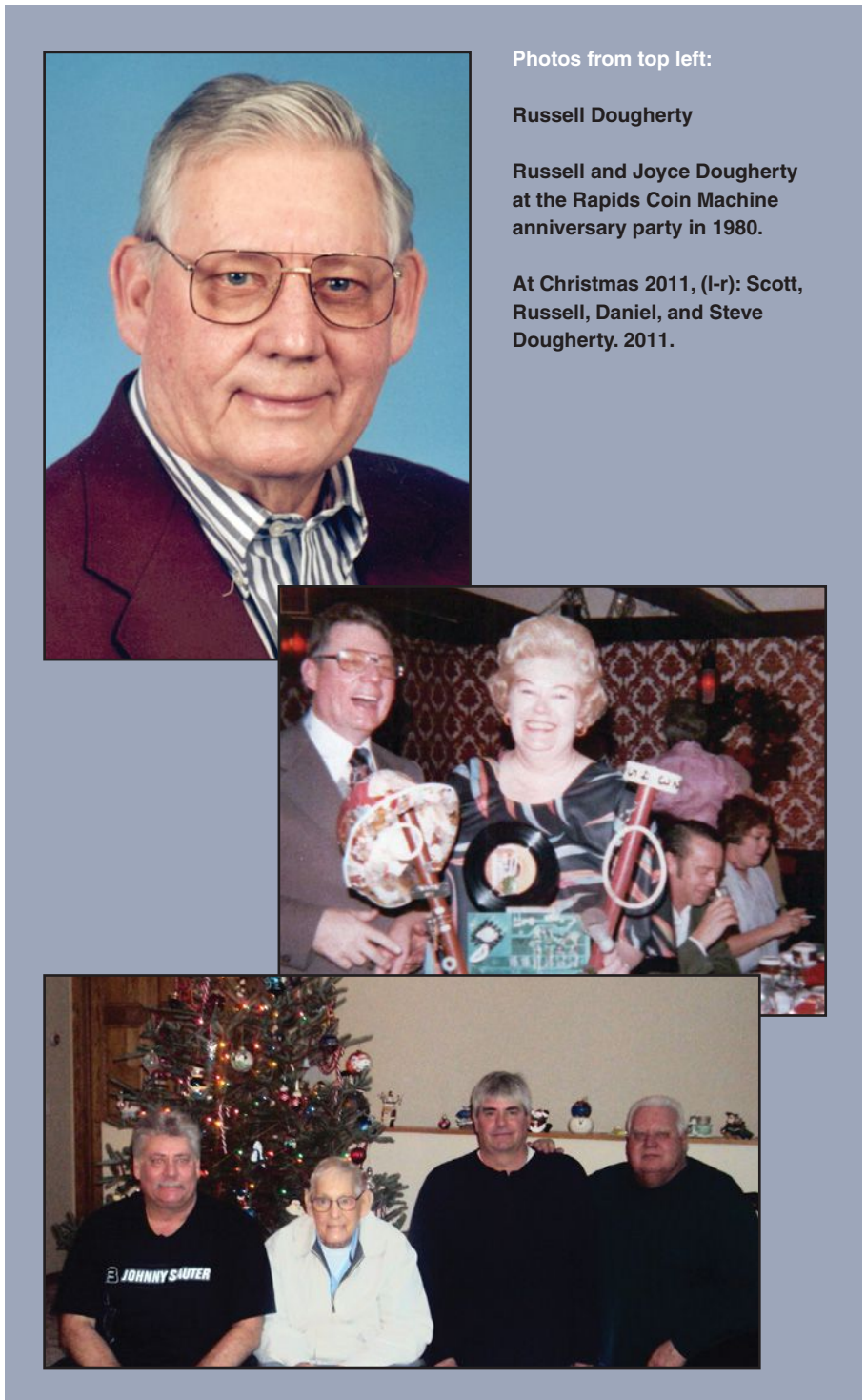
Russ served as president of the Wisconsin Amusement & Music Operators (WAMO) from 1977 to 1980 and was instrumental in starting the first WAMO Technical Training School. He also held a position on the Board of Directors of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) in the early ‘80s.

In addition, he received the Clint Pierce Award from WAMO in 2010. Russ’s son Scott continues to follow in his dad’s footsteps with D&D Amusement Games LLC in Waupaca, Wis.; Scott is also on the Board of Directors for WAMO.

Russ was active in his community and the local Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks Lodge in Wisconsin Rapids and Kissimmee, Fla.; he received the Elk of the Year award for outstanding services.

After moving to Florida, Russ enjoyed a second career as Sales Director for Sherwood Forest Manufactured Home Park in Kissimmee.

Wally Bohrer, a Past President of the AMOA, recalled, “I knew Russ for a long time. He and I were the first to start an apprenticeship program for coin machine technicians. The Univer-



Photos from top left:

Russell Dougherty

Russell and Joyce Dougherty at the Rapids Coin Machine anniversary party in 1980.

At Christmas 2011, (l-r): Scott, Russell, Daniel, and Steve Dougherty. 2011.

sity of Wisconsin worked with us on their technical certification; the program began in Wisconsin Rapids and later moved to Green Bay.”

He continued, “At the time the state association was known as the Wisconsin Music Merchants. Russ and I worked with other Wisconsin operators to make the association stronger and it became WAMO (the apprenticeship program became the WAMO Technical Training School). Russ was an honorable man. His word was his bond, and

if he said something you could take it to the bank. He was that kind of a guy.”

Russ is survived by three sons, Stephen, Scott, and Daniel of Wisconsin Rapids; daughter, Susan Fadli of Wausau, Wis.; 10 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and a special friend, Nona Peterson of Appleton, Wis. He was preceded in death by his wife of 33 years, Joyce; son, Chuck; brothers, Robert and William; and sister, Betty Smith. ▲



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This upright unit features a remote play button that offers easy access to mobility-challenged players, standard left/right handed play, and award-winning single LCD button panel with tactile mechanical overlay.

prodiGi Vu Slant

The Vu Slant is designed to give players a powerful gaming experience in complete comfort. The player-validated and technician-tested design includes dual 22-inch wide screen displays, high resolution animated graphics, multi-channel audio, full color digital buttons, game-driven accent lighting, and optimal screen angles for superior player ergonomics. Driven by the powerful sensysEP™ platform, the Vu Slant was built for full graphic and expansion capability.

VGT Mfg. Inc.

(847)253-2380; www.vgt.net

Vega\$ Jackpot\$™

Designed exclusively for Illinois, VGT's Vega\$ Jackpot\$™ comes jam-packed with 10 high-energy games. Games include Cherry 96, Gem Storm, Camelot, Cherry Cherry, Tutankhamun's Gold, Dueces Wild, Jacks or Better, Crazy Bill Strikes Again, and Bonus Poker. Two cabinet designs include the DS cabinet with two monitors and the LS model, which features one monitor.

WMS Gaming Inc.

(877)770-2646; www.wms.com

Betson Midwest (distributor)

(800)386-7040; www.betson.com

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BLUEBIRD2

Building on the ergonomically advanced original Bluebird cabinet and player-favorite brands, proven intellectual property and game play mechanics, Bluebird2 represents the next generation of sophisticated gaming equipment. Bluebird2 is loaded with features from quality and ergonomics to usability and supportability. Game themes include Zeus™ II, Hot Hot Super Respin™, Reel Rich Devil®, Spinning Streak®, Invaders from the Planet Moolah™, Cascading Reels™, Jackpot Block Party™, and Diamonds of Dublin™. ▲

HOT CLICKS

Illinois Video Gaming Suppliers



www.suzohapp.com

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www.payoutplus.com

EDC LLLP will be supplying PayoutPlus, an ATM that not only completes traditional debit transactions, but can also redeem video gaming terminal tickets.



www.jcmglobal.com

JCM American Corp. was recently licensed to supply bill validators, including the iVision, and other parts to the Illinois gaming market. ▲



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Illinois edges closer to video gaming



"Locations are looking to video gaming terminals to save their businesses. It's really the difference between putting up plywood on their windows and staying open."

After three long years of preparations, the Illinois Video Gaming Act that was signed into law in July 2009 is becoming a reality. At press time, an initial test of the system was imminent, with terminal installations expected to follow.

There were challenges and hurdles along the way, including a constitutional challenge in court and a setback with the initial selection of the company to supply the central computer system that monitors the program. Scientific Games has secured the contract for the central computer system.

More complications came from the provision that municipalities could opt out of the program, which some did. A number of municipalities that wanted the games found they had old laws on the books that prohibited gambling even though the legislature had passed the measure and Gov. Pat Quinn had signed it into law.

The Video Gaming Act is part of the 2009 \$31 billion capital improvement plan. License fees and the state's portion of revenue will be directed to that plan, which will undertake projects across the state and provide thousands of construction jobs.

Video gaming terminals can be located in bars, restaurants that serve alcohol, truck stops, and veterans and fraternal organizations. The games offered include video poker, line games, and blackjack. Up to five machines are allowed per location; the maximum bet is \$2, the highest win per play is \$500.

The Illinois Gaming Board (IGB) is charged with overseeing the program and has been evaluating license applications. At press time, licenses had been granted to 11 manufacturers, 15 distributors, six suppliers, one technician, five terminal handlers, 66 terminal operators, 16 establishments (bar/restaurant category), and one veterans establishment.

Pending license applications are: three manufacturers, four distributors, 34 tech-

nicians, 92 terminal handlers, 30 terminal operators, 1,070 establishments, 39 fraternal establishments, 83 veterans establishments, and 36 truck stops.

Each entity must pay a license fee to do business in the state. Gaming Laboratories International (GLI), which has offices around the globe, is the official terminal testing company for the Illinois program.

License application fees are: \$5,000 each for manufacturers, distributors, and terminal operators; \$2,500 for suppliers; \$100 for technicians; and \$50 for terminal handlers.

Annual license fees are: \$10,000 each for manufacturers and distributors; \$5,000 for terminal operators; \$100 for technicians, licensed establishments, and video gaming terminals; and \$50 for terminal handlers.

The proceeds after payouts to players are divided three ways: 30 percent to the state (five percent of that to the municipalities participating in the program), 35 percent to the establishment, and 35 percent to the operator who purchases the video gaming terminals and places them in the establishments/locations.

The licensing process is taking more time than anticipated. License applications are long and investigations are thorough. The list of pending applications is a 106-page printout.

PROGRESS

Play Meter spoke with Phil Webb of ASAP Vending, President of the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association (ICMOA), about the highly anticipated program that partners operators and the state to mutual benefit.

Webb said, "We're over the three year threshold and we're very excited to get this operation under way. On July 6 the IGB released standards for the payout systems that will be part of the program, and we feel this is one of the last pieces of the puzzle; we're almost there."

He continued, "We're fairly confident

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that the remainder of the puzzle will be completed right away and that Scientific Games will begin testing as soon as possible. We're anticipating the testing phase and hopefully when that is completed we will be able to begin rollout."

Webb added, "The ICMOA understands that the IGB is being cautious in this process. We support them and we are patient."

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Asked what the program will mean to locations, Webb said, "Our locations have suffered tremendously in recent years. Business owners experienced a 30 percent drop in business because of the smoking ban. In 2009 they suffered another 10 percent downturn because of the economy, and again in 2010.

"In the meantime, health care went up, the liquor tax went up, and property taxes went up. Locations are looking to video gaming terminals to save their businesses. These are small business owners; they need something like this. It's really the difference between putting up plywood on their windows and staying open."

MUNICIPALITIES

A number of communities have been

wrestling with the decision whether to change old ordinances on the books that prohibit gaming in order to participate in the program.

For example, look at Palos Hills. A recent *Chicago Tribune* report stated, "Support for the video gaming terminals is mixed on the Palos Hills City Council as aldermen prepare to vote on whether to allow it. 'If surrounding communities offer video poker, but the city does not, business owners would be at a disadvantage,' said Alderman Joan Knox, who chairs the city's Finance Committee. Knox said both Worth and Hickory Hills plan to allow it in bars and restaurants."

The report also said that several aldermen thought the games could help struggling businesses.

The village of Chatham voted on July 10 to allow the games. In a report at SJ-R.com, "Village President Tom Gray said allowing gaming machines will protect bars and restaurants in Chatham. Officials in Springfield and Sherman also have expressed support for amending their laws to allow video gambling."

Guss Candioto of Metro Gaming in Chatham, a licensed operator for video gaming terminals, said he is "looking forward to bringing the machines to local

businesses." He was quoted: "It's good to see your hometown is in favor."

Over in Benton, the City Council adopted an ordinance that overturns an old ordinance from the '70s that prohibited gambling. A report at Benton-EveningNews.com said, "Based on the assumption of 45,000 video gaming machines in the state and an average net revenue per machine per day value between \$70 and \$90, approximately \$287.4 million to \$369.6 million per year would be generated by the 25 percent tax rate (state portion after five percent to municipalities) according to a fiscal note to House Committee Amendment 1."

However, in Elgin, the Elgin City Council will maintain its ban on video gambling. A report in the *Daily Herald*, said, "Because of ordinances already in place, council members did not need to take a vote, but no one spoke out in favor of allowing video gambling.

"Councilman Richard Dunne did support a resolution urging state legislators to amend its statutes and allow separate consideration for nonprofits and fraternal organizations. The Elgin United Civics Association is working to draft a letter to the state asking for special permitting opportunities."

Elgin is a special case because it already has one of the 10 licensed riverboat casinos in Illinois, the Grand Victoria Casino. The Illinois Riverboat Gambling Act was passed in 1990.

The *Daily Herald* article also included this information: "Councilman John Prigge also referenced the Grand Victoria Casino, which has cited an industry study projecting a two to three percent revenue drop if video gambling were allowed. Prigge said loyalty is a 'two-way street,' and while pleas from restaurants, bars, and fraternal organizations were compelling, he could not support expanding gambling in town." Prigge said, "I don't know that I can do it at the expense of what has been a savior for us for 18 years."

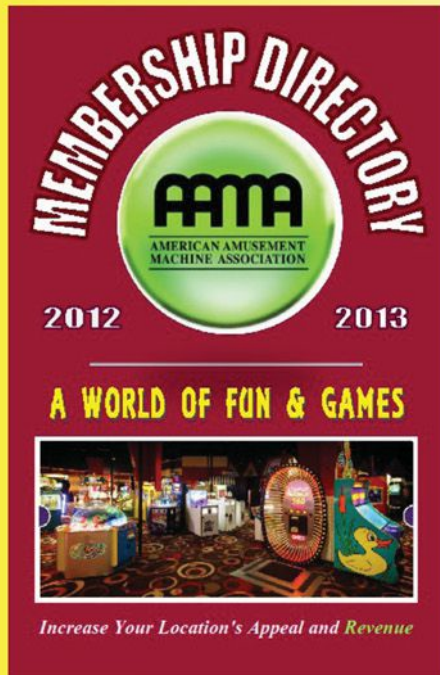
Play Meter will follow developments in Illinois closely. Look for more information as the program is implemented. ▲



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Firestone Financial

fuels

the amusement industry

We are only in August and it has already been an eventful year for Firestone Financial. The company established guidance lines of credit in excess of \$70 million for over 1,200 of its borrowers, introduced a rewards program, and launched loan promotions with the major manufacturers.

Play Meter caught up with David Cohen, Firestone's President and CEO; Larry Yaffe, Senior Vice President; Celine Perreault, Senior Vice President; and Jim Hines, Vice President; and their team to learn more about the company's current offerings.

Cohen gave *Play Meter* insight into Firestone's strategy: "The amusement and vending industries have been the core of our business since Firestone was established in 1965. Traditionally, our business has increased or decreased along with the sales of the manufacturers and distributors we serve."

He continued, "This year we decided to take a more proactive approach and do whatever possible to fuel the growth of these industries. All of our initiatives this year are focused on providing operators and family entertainment centers (FECs) the financial tools necessary to acquire products that will increase the revenue in their businesses."

"When deciding what initiatives to focus on for 2012 we evaluated the needs of the operators and came up with three very simplistic, but critical tools that operators need from their financial partner. The first item is credit capacity, the second is compelling promotions, and

TOP:
From left: David Cohen, Larry Yaffe, Celine Perreault, Carol Francis, Sal Cifala, Pete Aldrich, Jim Hines, Scott Cooper, and Spencer Norton.
(Stock car provided by F1 Boston).

the third is the ability to earn more money,” said Yaffe.

\$70 MILLION IN CREDIT

In May, in direct contradiction to other lenders, Firestone Financial established guidance lines of credit for over 1,200 of its borrowers that totaled over \$70 million. “With the lines, we put buying power in the hands of the operator; these lines carry no unused line fees, and they make the Firestone credit process streamlined and simple,” said Perreault.

“Before the recession, companies of all sizes were able to get loans like lines of credit,” said Jeff Stibel, CEO of Dun & Bradstreet Credibility Corp., a service that evaluates the creditworthiness of businesses. He added, “These days, the most successful borrowers are ones that are almost medium-sized.” Generally, according to the Small Business Administration (SBA), a small business has fewer than 500 employees.

While the banks have tightened their underwriting requirements and have also increased their compliance requirements, Firestone has gone the other way. “We have the benefit of knowing the operators and the industry; this allows us to be more flexible and to do things the banks cannot,” explained Hines.

John Harter of Big Fun Entertainment can attest to the ease of using Firestone. Harter recently grew his route through acquisition and when he approached his bank to help finance his growth he found that the banks were not responsive. “When the banks said no, Firestone said yes,” he said. Harter has used his line to finance the purchase of a route



TOP LEFT:
Charles Rowland (l) of Games People Play of Richmond receives his Platinum Partner award from Jim Hines.

TOP RIGHT:
Albert Minachi (l) and Jeff Passman (r) of Paramount Vending receive their Platinum Partner award from Jim Hines.

BOTTOM:
Each year Firestone chooses several charities to support. In April, the company joined in with the Boston Red Sox to Rally Against Cancer and raised funds for the Jimmy Fund and the Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

and also to acquire new jukeboxes and games as well.

0% APR AND LOW APR PROMOTIONS

Factory-sponsored promotions have been a staple of Firestone’s offering for years, and in 2012 this trend continues. “Promotions are a vital component of the health and growth of our industry; we appreciate that our manufacturer and distributor partners continue to support this aspect of our business,” said Cohen.

“We are thrilled at the promotions we have been able to offer to the amusement industry,” said Hines. “Just this year we have offered promotions with over 15 industry manufacturers and dozens of distributors. We have offered finance promotions for virtually any product an operator could want.”

Operators echo the importance of the factory sponsored promotions. Jerry Johnston of Amusement Unlimited has used Firestone Financial for his financing for over 20 years. “The promotional loans Firestone offers are an important part of my business,” he said.

REWARDS PROGRAM

Firestone Partners, a rewards program for borrowers in the amusement and vending





Jerry Johnston of Amusement Unlimited has been a Firestone customer for over 20 years.



John Harter of Big Fun Entertainment Inc. said, "When the banks said no, Firestone said yes."



Helen Mooney, a veteran of the sales team, recently celebrated her 25th anniversary with Firestone Financial.

industries, was also launched this year. Similar to credit card and miles rewards programs, Firestone Partners offers rewards based upon the amount financed. Qualifying borrowers can opt for cash back and membership with industry associations such as the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) and the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA).

"In addition to helping put money into our borrower's pockets, we also want to show our appreciation to our long-time customers," explained Hines. "The ability to have their 2013 AMOA or NAMA membership paid for by Firestone was a big driving force in the success of the program," added Carol Francis, Director of Marketing.

Over 400 customers have signed up for the rewards program. To date, several borrowers have already earned thousands of dollars in rewards. While sign up for 2012 was only available through the end of April, Firestone Partners have until the end of the year to earn rewards.

George Yost from Snacks for a Purpose commented, "I have used Firestone Financial for years; the rewards program is great because I receive cash back for a service I already use."

Ernie Barberio of Barberio Music Co. is also looking forward to collecting his rewards. He said, "I have earned thousands of dollars with Firestone Partners."

PLATINUM PARTNERS

For the past few years, Firestone has honored its manufacturer and distributor partners for their contributions to the amusement industry, bestowing

them with the prestigious Platinum Partner award. For the first time this year, at the Amusement Expo, Firestone Financial honored its operators as well.

Manufacturers honored were: AMI Entertainment Network, Apple Industries Inc., Bay Tek Games Inc., Raw Thrills Inc., and TouchTunes Interactive Networks.

Distributors honored were: American Vending Sales Inc., Brady Distributing Co., Green Coin Machine, H. Betti Industries Inc., Mountain Coin Machine Distributors, Moss Distributing, and Shaffer Distributing Co.

Operators honored were: Ace Amusement Service Inc. in Florida, All Florida Amusements Inc. in Florida, Alligator Computer Systems in Ohio, Automated Services LLC in Connecticut, Barberio Music Co. in Texas, Ferris Music Service Inc. in Maine, Games People Play of Richmond in Virginia, M&A Group LLC in Florida, Medalist Marketing Corp. in Washington, Miele Inc. in Pennsylvania, Music Vendors Inc. in North Carolina, Number One Vending Service in Florida, Paramount Vending Inc. in Florida, Stanton Automatics Inc. in New York, Variety Specialties & Amusement in Illinois, and West Coast Amusements in California.

Following its annual tradition, Firestone Financial has made a contribution to the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF) in honor of the Platinum Partners. Cohen and Hines serve on the board of the foundation.

VIDEO GAMING

In May, Firestone hired Dan McAllister to lead its business development

efforts. In addition to developing new markets for Firestone, Dan will lead the company's effort in the video gaming market.

"We have all waited a long time for things to fall into place in Illinois. Now that it has finally become a reality, Firestone is here to provide the licensed operators the financing they need," said Cohen.

LOOKING AHEAD

We asked Firestone's management to provide their opinion on the future of coin-op. The team remains bullish. "I am enthusiastic about the incorporation of the social networking component built into today's games and jukeboxes, I believe this will help to rejuvenate the market," said Cohen.

"In the past few years we have seen operators use a more thoughtful approach to acquisitions, utilizing technology with their products to maximize their revenue and effectively using cash flow management techniques," said Hines.

"They have also become savvier in applying measured debt to build their businesses; I see this continuing and evolving, which benefits everyone involved in the industry."

In addition to fueling the amusement and vending industries, Firestone also provides competitive financing solutions for amusement parks, carnivals, and health clubs.

For more information on Firestone Financial, call (800)851-1001; e-mail (websales@firestonefinancial.com); Web (www.firestonefinancial.com). ▲

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City of Laconia Mayor Michael Seymour and Bob Lawton cut the ribbon at Funspot's 60th anniversary.

Funspot in New Hampshire celebrated its 60th anniversary this June, a feat rarely accomplished in the family entertainment center (FEC) industry. Owner Bob Lawton, now 81, was on hand to cut the ribbon at the celebratory event. Afterwards, he spoke with *Play Meter* about the facility's history and longevity, and looking forward to 60 more years.

Lawton opened Funspot in 1952 after graduating from college with a B.S. in Chemistry. "I wanted to do something fun," Lawton said, "so when I was 21 I decided to open a mini golf center and hired an operator to supply the games. We started out with a Williams baseball game and a pinball game."

In 1952 he opened the location on Lakeside Avenue in Laconia, N.H., and stayed there until 1964. He then bought 18 acres of land on Route Three in Wiers Beach, Laconia, N.H., because of a lack of parking in the downtown area. As luck would have it, the land came cheap.

Lawton said, "The total price of the 21 acres was 16,000. We had a gentleman that wanted to buy two acres on one end. He paid \$12,000 for that and we got the other 19 for \$4,000. We didn't have any money. When we started the business I had to borrow \$750 from my grandmother. That was enough to build the golf course, build the fence, do some plumbing, and buy whatever sup-

plies we needed. We got the land and bought a chainsaw and started cutting trees. We built the 18-hole mini golf course and it's still here today."

Lawton later purchased the two acres back for \$280,000 to make room for additional parking.

Funspot was 25 years in the business before the video boom took off. Lawton said, "The first video game we bought was Tank! in 1977. At that time we had only electro-mechanical games. If two people played Tank!, two people had to put in a quarter a piece. The video boom really got us going. We soon were able to open seven locations. Every time we made an addition we put another 100 games and pinball machines in. It was an amazing thing in the '80s, we just knew when we opened a place that it was going to do great."

The boom ended for most in the late '80s. It took a few years for Funspot to feel the effects but ultimately, they made it through. Lawton said, "In 1990, frankly we didn't know what we were going to do. Everything runs its course I think. We put in a bingo hall, which is a state-authorized attraction. That's worked out well for us. Then we added a tavern. Soon after that, the biggest bowling center in the area closed so we added bowling lanes and took in the leagues that had nowhere else to play. We never had a lot of money to work with but we were always careful about what we did."

And that care paid off. Today the 70,000-square-foot facility sees plenty

Entrance to Funspot's Mini-Golf and walkway to Storybook Forest, the children's park, circa 1980.



of tourists eager to check out the historic mini golf course and visit the American Classic Arcade museum, located inside the facility. According to Lawton, the area has been a tourist hot spot since the mid 1800s. Today, many flock to the area specifically to visit Funspot.

Inside the museum, there are over 500 games. Tank! Is a popular one, along with SeaWolf and Indy 4. In 1998, one of Funspot's long-term employees, Gary Vincent, Operations Manager, suggested they take all of the classic games and put them in one place as a museum. They did some renovations and held the first International Classic Video Game Tournament.

Lawton commented, "Everyone has their favorite old game. Mine is Rally X and has been since 1980. This year we celebrated the 13th annual tournament. Through the years we've had people from all over the world come to it."

Today the big earners, game-wise, are in the ticket redemption category. Lawton said that since the mid '90s he's been buying almost nothing but fast ticket games, and the facility has no intention of moving to a card-swipe system.

He explained, "We know the hassle with tickets and we understand that. But we observe that people love to have these piles of tickets. It's worked out beautifully for us the way we do it now."

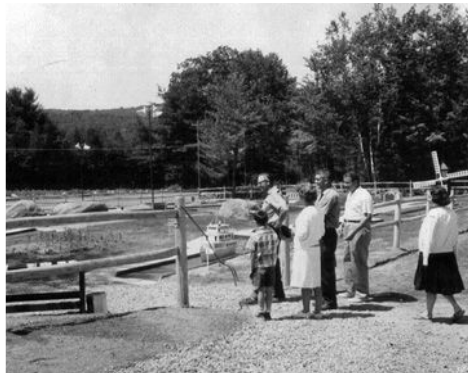
Recently, the facility enjoyed a surge in visitors due to the publicity it received from being featured on the History Channel program "American Restoration." On the show, an antique boat ride called Sea Skate was restored and Lawton was interviewed. The 15-minute segment prompted many to visit the facility in hopes of seeing the boat ride and meeting Lawton personally.

Lawton said, "I can't go anywhere now without someone saying they saw me on the History Channel!"

As far as prizes go, items featuring Funspot's logo do the best. "People like to remember their trips here," Lawton explained, "In our 60 years we've had



John Lawton (l) and brother Bob on the mini golf course in 2003.



Mayor Hugh Bownes cuts the ribbon on opening day of Funspot's Route Three location on August 1, 1964.



Tournament circa 1980s

The mini golf course today.



three generations coming here. People stop me all the time and say 'hello' and tell me their parents brought them here when they were toddlers and now they bring their kids here. I like to go out and reminisce with people about the old days."

Today Funspot is very much a family venture, with several of Bob's children being actively involved in the management of the facility. Funspot's tavern, D.A. Long, is named for Lawton's grandfather, who he lived with throughout his young life. Long started a paper in the late 1800s called the *Low Sunday Telegram*, which he sold upon retiring.

Lawton said, "Newspaper publishing is in our DNA. We started a newspaper here 20 years ago called the *Wiers Times*. It's now the largest free state weekly in N.H."

Additionally, the family is and has always been actively involved in politics. After following his mother's lead and serving as a legislator in 1969, Lawton introduced the bill that added the phrase "Victory or Die" to New Hampshire license plates.

From the unique perspective of someone who's been in the business for 60 years, Lawton had some advice for those wishing to open an FEC, "If you want to start a business, you've got to understand that it's not going to be easy. Just try to make it through the first three years. You're going to work more hours and harder than your employees. It comes down to whether you feel as though it's the life you want; to be able to control your own destiny. I enjoy every day. I open the building seven days a week at 8 o'clock. I work 60 hours a week. I've always been busy and a business owner has to expect to be busy."

He added, "Stick with it and don't be afraid. Talk to people you trust and respect and get their opinion but the decision is yours because the buck stops here. All I know is that life is good." ▲



Prizeland, Funspot's prize center.



Funspot Bowling Center offers 10 lanes of candlepin and 10 lanes of ten pin bowling.



Gary Vincent in the American Classic Arcade Museum.



A series of pinballs in the American Classic Arcade Museum.



An overview shot of the American Classic Arcade Museum.

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SAY WHAT?



10

second
interview
with...

Dorothy Lewis' 22-year career started when she worked as a part time skate guard for Al Kress. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., she grew up in the Bronx and moved to Connecticut 30 years ago where she raised her family in between college and managing multi-centers. Now a published author and writer, her latest project has been working with Lokomotion Family Fun Park in Arkansas in its quest to re-invent the 18-years-young facility with new attractions and programs.

My first job was:

a studio tour guide at CBS-TV.

My favorite type of music is:

Country.

I wish I had the nerve to:

drive a motorcycle.

One thing I can't live without is:

my phone!

The last book I read was:

"Brainfluence: 100 Ways to Persuade and Convince Consumers with Neuromarketing" by Roger Dooley.

One word that describes my personality is:

outgoing (so I've been told).

The best advice I ever got was:

"The business will still be there tomorrow. No matter how busy you are, ALWAYS take time for your family."

My favorite TV show is:

"Smash."

If I could have dinner with a famous person that person would be:

Oprah Winfrey.

My most cherished inanimate possession is:

a picture painted by my mom.

PROFITABILITY



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Jim Chapman



Soon it will be time for back to school items in redemption counters and merchandisers. From reading programs to cool backpacks with your facility logo, get creative to make the most of this season.

Jim Chapman has been a part of the coin-op industry for over 25 years. His experience ranges from manufacturing cranes, merchandisers, redemption, and video games to operational experience in FECs. You can find him at trade shows sharing his passion and experience when giving redemption seminars. He can be reached via e-mail (jimmychaps@aol.com).

School days ahead

TIP ONE

It is almost time for school to start. Have you contacted your local schools to promote your location? I love to do a reading program for each month of the school year. I would give 20 tokens for every child that completed their reading requirements. I was able to get my logo on the sheet the school gave every child monthly. This works great as this sheet normally ends up on the fridge at home. No better place to have your logo than in the kitchen!



TIP TWO

If you're having trouble finding prizes that fit into a Winner's Cube, use a display case to show off the great prizes you have and put numbered boxes in the squares. The numbers match up with the numbers on the prizes in your display case. With this method, not only do you expand your array of prizes but you add another way to catch your customer's eyes and wallet!

TIP THREE

As mentioned in Tip One, kids are heading back to school soon. Great items to add to your redemption counter are backpacks filled with school supplies! All kids want a new backpack; let them win one with the tickets they earn on your redemption games. Try

adding this to your merchandisers as well. School supplies are not cheap and if you have a cool backpack, maybe one with your great logo, the kids and their parents will play for it. You may even want to toss in one of your gift cards.



TIP FOUR

I recently spent nine days in China visiting manufacturers and arcades. I learned a great deal and came home with a few new ideas as well as a true appreciation of what we all take for granted.

I will share one of the ideas I came away with via a picture of how Chinese operators dress up their cranes. Placing colorful toppers on their cranes really complemented what they were offering in each crane. In person the crane looked great, grabbed their customers' attention, and added a new dimension to their location. If you need help doing this for your cranes, give me a call and I would be happy to help you.

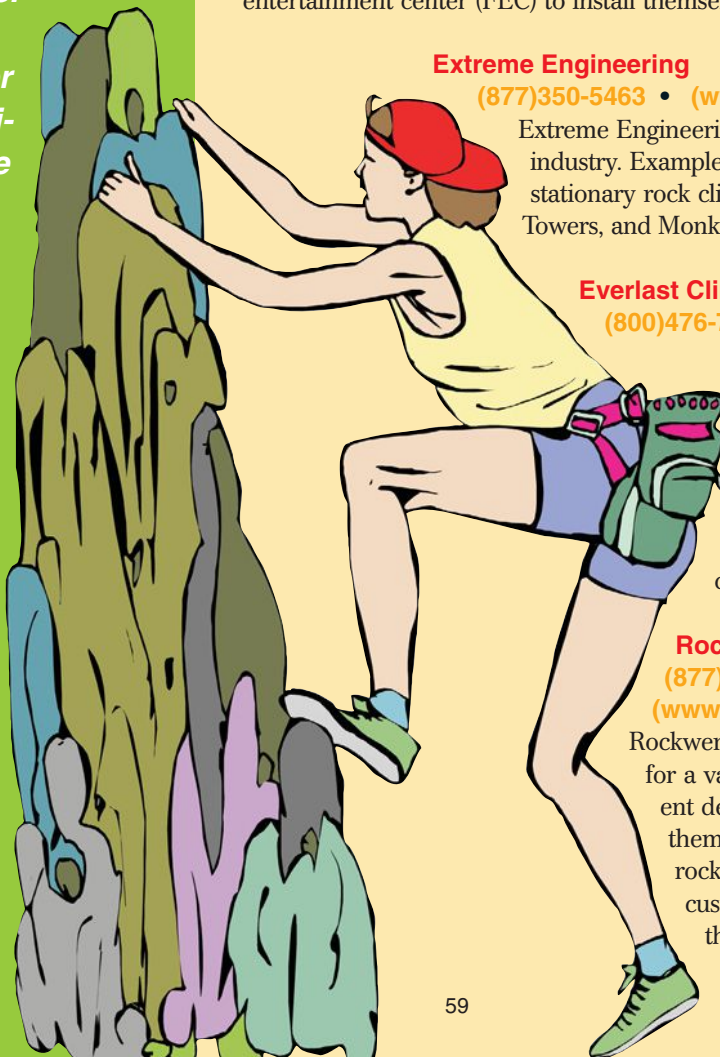
So there you have it; four very strong tips for you to put to good use. As always, use them as they are or adjust them to fit your needs. I am here to help in any way possible.

I leave you with one last thought: Say what you mean, but don't be mean! ▲



TARGET: Rock climbing

Rock climbing, once only accessible to the athletic and daring, is becoming increasingly popular in the form of rock walls. These stationary rock facades offer the fun and physical benefits of the rock climbing experience in a safe and controlled environment. This month we're targeting rock wall manufacturers, so your guests can scale mountains at your facility.



Eldorado Climbing Walls

(303)447-0512 • (www.eldowalls.com)

Eldorado Climbing Walls has several products for the FEC market. The Gecko Modular Climbing Wall has 4x7 fiberglass panels mounted on a wooden frame (provided by customer). The wall has belay bars at the top and can be used for rope climbing. SOLIDRock traverse panels are 4x4 fiberglass panels mounted on a wood frame (provided by customer). The panels are easy for a family entertainment center (FEC) to install themselves and easy to maintain.

Extreme Engineering

(877)350-5463 • (www.extremeengineering.com)

Extreme Engineering has several products for the FEC industry. Examples include mobile rock climbing walls, stationary rock climbing walls, Spider Zone™ Adventure Towers, and Monkey Motion jumper systems.

Everlast Climbing Industries (Traverse)

(800)476-7366 • (www.traversewall.com)

Everlast Climbing Industries offers high-quality and unique climbing walls. The company's climbing walls, along with its hand holds, mats, safety features, curriculum, and accessories, will enable you to develop a climbing program for the younger crowd.

Rockwerx

(877)595-4155

(www.rockwerxclimbing.com)

Rockwerx produces custom designed rock walls for a variety of venues including FECs. Different designs are possible including naturally themed rocks with climbing capability and rock walls. The company works with each customer on an individual basis to meet the needs of their facility. ▲



Stacking and Smacking



Josh and Zach Sharpe

The cornered critics review two quirky children's games from Andamiro with game play that even adults can enjoy.

As promised, we wanted to have a quick summary from this year's International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA) World Pinball Championship that brought 64 of the top ranked pinball players from 12 countries to Bainbridge Island, Wash., to compete for the chance to become the new IFPA World Pinball Champion.

The Battle in Seattle was truly a battle of champions, as three of the top four finishers were the three previous IFPA World Pinball Champions. For the championship it was a battle between the IFPA 7 champion from Italy, Daniele Celestino Acciari, and last year's champion from Seattle, Cayle George. In the end though, Acciari beat George to become this year's IFPA World Pinball Champion, bringing the title back to Italy where it will be for the rest of 2012, along with \$1,350 cash and a brand new pinball machine from Stern Pinball.

Acciari's World Championship victory capped off an incredible week of tournament performance in Seattle and when all is said and done, we may have a new number one-ranked pinball player by year's end, which would be an incredible feat.

Again we'd like to take this opportunity to thank many of the sponsors that help make this tournament bigger and better each and every year: *Play Meter* magazine, Stern Pinball, Raw Thrills, Farsight Studios, Betson Enterprises, Jersey Jack Pinball, Marco Specialties, Planetary Pinball Supply, GameWorks, Zen Studios, Pinball Center, Pinball Life, the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA), and the American

Amusement Manufacturers Association (AAMA).

Next year's championship will be held overseas in Frankfort, Germany, May 31-June 2, 2013.

For this month's column, we will take a look at not one, but two games from Andamiro's stable: Teeter Totter Castle and Smart Smacker.

TEETER TOTTER CASTLE/ ANDAMIRO

Analysis: Using the button on the front of the cabinet, players simply press it to time the release of the swinging blocks on the screen. At first, these blocks must be successfully dropped onto a pole, which is at the center of the screen. However, after about three blocks worth, if the player doesn't stack the blocks on top of each other as centered as possible, they can begin to sway and eventually fall down and the game ends.

The higher the blocks get, the more tickets are won. A player can eventually reach the elusive jackpot by stacking the bricks all the way to the top. Sadly, we did not achieve this, so we're not sure how many blocks in total are needed.

Pros: Similar to what we really enjoyed about Winner's Ringer (formerly Tower of Hanoi) remains true with Teeter Totter Castle and that is the realistic feel of the visuals on screen. Typically with most Stacking-style games, it feels very static and confined. Teeter Totter just feels more fluid and it creates a more memorable and dynamic experience.

More importantly, if a player messes up and incorrectly drops the stack, the onus is on the player. It never feels as if one has dropped it correctly and the game "percentaged" the player out of a win. In addition, without this being a merchandiser like Winner's Ringer, Andamiro definitely had more creative





liberties with the overall cabinet design and it didn't disappoint.

Cons: The additional balance aspect to the stacking of objects is a nice touch. However, we feel that if this were essentially a blind taste test for players (covering up the company name), it would take a matter of seconds for players to know that these two games are from the same company. While that is not necessarily a bad thing from an awareness standpoint, will this similarity between games fight players for their same token as opposed to offering “enough” of a different experience to where players would want to drop coins into each game?

Overall: There's no denying that Andamiro as a company is becoming way more comfortable and adept at creating successful visual redemption games. It's done an outstanding job of using its quirky style and applying it to the cabinet design and game play of Teeter Totter Castle.

However, our main concern still applies to the differentiation between this title and the company's previous stacking-style game. While there is the distinction between Winners' Ringer being a merchandiser and Teeter Totter Castle being a video redemption game, with the similarities being so blatantly obvious, we just wonder why Andamiro didn't stick with the title/theme of Winners' Ringer.

Perhaps the company wanted to create a different storyline or mood with its latest, but we are just concerned that these games could be fighting for that same coin drop if they also happen to be at the same location. Nonetheless, the game play speaks for itself and it's simply fun.

Overall rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

SMART SMACKER/ ANDAMIRO

Analysis: Players interact with the screen using small hammers in this one or two-player game. The quirky

quizzes, games, and questions suggest that children are definitely the target audience. Using the hammer, players attempt to solve the problems as quickly as they can by using the hammer to interact with what's taking place on the screen. Games are agility-based, speed-based, or knowledge-based.



Pros: Easily our biggest pro is the wide assortment of games available. It almost feels like an iPod filled with 20 different game apps. Going one step further, each game feels completely independent and original. There is a lot of variety to keep players coming back for more. In addition, the sounds really complement the action of the hammer well, providing players with some really great feedback with great sound effects and speech calls.

The added function of head-to-head play really amps up the competitive aspect and we're big fans of competition. It also doesn't hurt that the cabinet design is very cute and definitely fits the mold of an Andamiro game.

Cons: Our biggest concern with

Smart Smacker (and maybe this has been addressed from when we played it at the Amusement Expo) is the lack of “redemption” quality to it. Not to say that every game on the market should incorporate tickets into game play. However, when you are actively trying to engage an audience that predominantly plays games for tickets, we would have loved to have seen at least the option for operators to set this game to ticket play.

Overall: We feel Andamiro has done another fantastic job venturing outside of its comfort zone and into the world of video redemption. Funny enough, even though this game is clearly geared towards children, the games within Smart Smacker actually get progressively harder to the point where even we had trouble successfully completing it or getting answers correct.

To expound on our one con, we really feel the lack of tickets for this game could be its downfall. We alluded to this game feeling like an all-inclusive iPad with 20 games, so why play an arcade version of these games with no tickets available when a child can easily play similar games on their parents' iPad/tablet for free? That being said, judging solely on its game play and function, Smart Smacker would be a great addition to any local family entertainment center (FEC) without a doubt. ▲

Overall Rating: ★ ★ ★ 3/4

With a father like Roger Sharpe, the original “Cornered Critic,” it is probably no surprise that sons Josh and Zach share a true passion for the coin-op industry. Former pinball champions, both are recognized as being two of the finest players in the world. But their interest and skills have grown far beyond the silver ball to embrace video games and attractions of all types.

Yelp, the new Yellow Pages

Become familiar with this social media site and help cast your business' name in a good light.

Yelp, for those who are unfamiliar with the name, can be best described as the online, social media equivalent to the good old Yellow Pages. As more and more people are turning to various forms of social media to find out information about businesses, Yelp has become the leader in providing online local search capabilities.

A “search” includes what type of business one is looking for, such as a restaurant, and the geographic location from which the search is performed, such as a specific address, neighborhood, city, or zip code.

The business results contain a rating, reviews, and details such as the address and hours. These help the reader form an opinion of the business, based on what others have written.

These businesses are arranged by city and a “multi-tier categorization” system. The listings can also be researched through reviews or by Yelp member profiles and their review lists.

Yelp also has a very user-friendly mobile app to help users discover new places to patronize while out and about. Yelp embraces social media and frequent users tend to write reviews about their experiences at visited businesses, which creates their own online community. Visitors can determine for themselves which other users are the most popular, and how long each has been a member.

Business owners can also communicate with contributors who post reviews on their page via messages or public comments. If you have a Yelp page already, it is important that you review your ratings and see what kind of reviews you have.

If you have a negative review, no matter how long it has been there, please, please, (yes, two please) respond to that user both in a private message and publicly. Readers look to see how the business responds to negative comments. If you don't do anything, that is saying something about your business.

Yelp allows real people to contribute their own reviews. Personally, in the past, I would tend to only use Yelp to write negative reviews and blast the business about their poor service. As someone who has spent so many years in the customer service environment, when I don't get it, I report it! Lately, I have changed my strategy with Yelp and have praised businesses for the outstanding service they give as well.

So, what does this mean to you? As an operator, distributor, manufacturer, etc., people are going online to find your business. They aren't going to their Yellow Pages to look for you anymore. In fact, San Francisco, Calif., is banning the Yellow Pages from being distributed to its residents.

I know as soon as my Yellow Pages lands on the porch, I immediately take it to the recycle bin. Once someone has found your business on Yelp, they can learn a little more about your company based on your profile, your specialties, and your history. There is also an area where you can put a link to your business's Web site. In the listing area, there is a section called “Meet the Business Owner.” This is where the reader can discover more about you as well.

Also, as you are providing services to your bars, restaurants, and other clients, you should be asking your business owners what their involvement with Yelp is. Remember, if they aren't making money, you aren't making money! Help them discover Yelp and how to not only embrace it, but use it. There might be many business owners that use Yelp so much that they could help you.

Yelp also offers advertising. I have helped several clients with this. I recommend businesses spend some money (usually starting around \$500 a month) to advertise on Yelp. There are some benefits from Yelp advertising. First, it will drive current Yelp users to your listing. Second, your business gets an enhanced profile.

This includes a photo slide show of your products or services and a video about your business. Any competitor ads are removed from your listing page as well. These things help your listing look as great as possible. I have seen views jump up 149 percent, once my clients have started advertising on Yelp. I would say that is a good thing!

As a business owner, Yelp provides you with your own back end management Web site where you can view metrics. The site is (www.biz.yelp.com). At



Wes Romine is the Owner of A(Wes)ome Media, a company dedicated to helping small businesses use social media to their advantage. Romine has been an industry member for over 11 years. He got his start in the industry working as Director of Social Media Sales for Ecast. He can be reached via e-mail at (wes@awesomemedia.biz).

this site, you add information about your business, including hours, products, and services, along with a company description and additional information.

You can see how many visitors have viewed your page and it will tell you how many were from mobile devices. Also, you can find how many people clicked on the link to your Web site. And if you advertise, they have additional metrics to tell you how many ad clicks have been performed. All of these metrics help you determine if users are coming to your listing.

When someone writes a review about your business they can also give you a rating, up to five stars if they love you. Yelp takes the average of your star rankings and places it right next to your business information. Obviously the more positive reviews you have the higher your star ranking will be.

“Readers look to see how the business responds to negative comments. If you don’t do anything, that is saying something about your business.”

There is some controversy surrounding Yelp and some of the reviews that have been written about businesses. Sometimes a review can get “filtered” or hidden from a business’s listing. Here is some insight to this behavior. Businesses have tried to “up” their ratings in Yelp by offering their loyal customers discounts or perks if the customer writes a good review on Yelp. Now, as positive reviews should be encouraged, Yelp wants to keep it balanced and as real as possible. They want a balanced view of your business. This secures their validity.

So, here are a few of the “warning

signals” Yelp automatically looks for.

1. If the reviewer has never written a review, but all of a sudden writes a rave review.

2. If the reviewer doesn’t have any other friends on Yelp.

3. If the review doesn’t have a picture associated with their profile.

Any of these or a combination of these could result in a user’s review of your business being filtered and not appearing on your Yelp page. These are good things to remember when talking to people who ask why their review has been filtered on your listing or one of your clients’ listings. ▲

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A conversation with the AAMA Chairman

John Margold will soon begin his second year as Chairman of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA). Margold is the Senior Vice President of Sales for AMI Entertainment Network.

On the eve of AAMA's Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala, Aug. 6-10 in Lisle, Ill., *Play Meter* checked in with Margold for his comments on his first year in office, his goals, and more.

Did you achieve your goals for the first year, and what are your goals for the second year?

My predecessor, David Cohen of Firestone Financial Corp., focused on transparency. He wanted all AAMA members to know what was going on at the board level and to be well informed. He did a wonderful job. Last year at the Gala I said I wanted to build on that and continue to keep the organization transparent and open and to include more people in the decision making process.

I also wanted more of the younger members to participate and to feel that they had a hand in shaping the future of the industry their families depend upon. I did not want it to be a good old boy network. Today I look at the board and see many new additions of the upcoming generation.

For example, board members Chris Felix of MEI and Holy Meidl of Bay Tek Games recently accompanied AAMA President John Schultz and representatives of SNR Denton to Washington, D.C., to visit with legislators to express our industry's views on the dollar coin, taxes, and insurance regulations.

It is very good to meet people of influence in Washington, D.C., when you don't need them because when you do need a friend it is much too late to make a friend.

How valuable is the Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala?

It's an important time for the association. We get a chance to meet with our members and get them up to date. One of the great values of the Gala is the opportunity to meet with manufacturers from different factories and to see their new products all during the same week. In the past, manufacturers in the Chicago area invited distributors to see their products during the summer. The Gala saves on travel expenses, which is an added benefit in this economy.

At the meeting this year, factories may request one-on-

one meetings with distributors. The more value we give the manufacturer members, the more they participate. And the more they participate, the more value they give to the distributor members. It's a two-way street.

Do you communicate often with your counterpart, the AMOA President?

We communicate frequently; it's a healthy relationship. We will also see each other at state associations meetings this summer. Any time I can meet with high ranking officials of AMOA it's beneficial.

The issues faced by our industry affect us all. Currently, both associations are concerned about possible legislation in California that would make it more difficult for people to succeed with self-redemption products that are so important today. Members of both associations are tied into these products that award a nice prize. We're concerned that legislation would be proposed that would inhibit or restrict these products.

Another common concern is unlicensed jukeboxes. Operators who pay all the proper royalties on their jukeboxes want to know that any operator they compete with is also paying those royalties. Yet there have been some jukeboxes that have skirted these responsibilities. Andy Shaffer (AMOA President) and I both agree that there should be a level playing field. We are working together on this issue.

The Amusement Expo in March was upbeat by all indications. Are you encouraged about the future of the expo?

I heard no exhibitor express disappointment in the amount of traffic they got for their investment. It was a very positive show with an upbeat attitude. People went to the show looking for items that would help them grow their businesses. We've seen two years of growth (exhibitors and attendance) with the expo, and that's not easy to do.

The Amusement Expo 2013 will again be co-located with the National Bulk Vending Association (NBVA) Show. It's good to expand the base of business and the customer base; that's a very healthy sign.

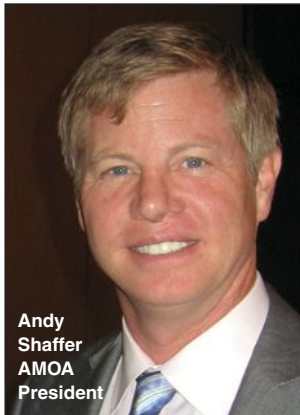
Many attendees took advantage of our educational sessions. The expo is not just about networking and products. It's about getting smarter and running your business more efficiently. ▲



John Margold
AAMA
President

"The Amusement Expo is not just about networking and products. It's about getting smarter and running your business more efficiently."

Travels with the AMOA President



Andy Shaffer
AMOA
President

“I’m at these events to learn from other operators.”

TRIO OF STATE VISITS

Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) President Andy Shaffer was on the road constantly in June traveling to state association events. He attended meetings and conferences sponsored by the Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements (MOMA), the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators Association (WAMO), and the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association (ICMOA).

Shaffer gave kudos to Chuck Leininger, Executive Director of MOMA; Maxine O’Brien, Executive Director of WAMO; and Rich Mitchell, Executive Director of ICMOA, for being gracious hosts, and to the operators in the three states for being welcoming and generous.

At all the events Shaffer sought to raise awareness of potential legislation in California in the Chuck E. Cheese case. Shaffer said, “I seek to educate everywhere I go regarding the possible destruction of merchandisers in our industry if a proposed \$10 prize limit goes through in California.

“Because Chuck E. Cheese has locations nationwide, the effects could be widespread. Ninety percent of product that operators are putting in merchandisers exceeds \$10.” He said that AMOA has recommended some revisions to the legislation.

Regarding the state meetings, Shaffer said, “I’m at these events to learn from other operators. I’m there to learn as much as I can while I’m traveling in each state. I promote AMOA and hope to attract quality directors to the association.”

During his travels, Shaffer was able to spend time with the operators and manufacturers present and his counterpart at the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA), John Margold, Chairman of AAMA.

Shaffer socialized at the golf outing and buffet dinner in Minnesota. He thanks Mike Hawkins of D&R Star for “taking me under

his wing and introducing me to as many people as possible.”

In Wisconsin, Shaffer was joined by a contingent from AMOA to speak with manufacturers in attendance about augmenting the AMOA Advantage Program that offers special benefits to AMOA members. The group included Jack Kelleher, Executive Vice President of AMOA; Gary Brewer, a Past President of AMOA; John Pascaretti, First Vice President of AMOA; and Jim Marsh, a Vice President of AMOA (Class of 2015).

The Wisconsin program included a legislative update, technical training sessions, awards banquet, and an evening at Miller Park for a Milwaukee Brewers baseball game.

In Illinois, Shaffer said the meeting and show were “extremely well attended by high quality operators, manufacturers, and distributors. I was humbled speaking in front of the ICMOA.”

He continued, “Gaming was obviously a huge topic. My personal highlight from the luncheon was getting the entire room of 150+ to sing ‘Happy Birthday’ to Frank Gumma Sr. of American Vending Sales (AVS) and making him blush.” Gumma celebrated his 80th birthday.

AMOA representatives at the ICMOA meeting included Jack Kelleher; Vince Gumma of AVS, an AMOA Vice President (Class of 2015); Chris Hesch of A.H. Entertainers, former AMOA Board of Directors member; and Don Hesch, Past President of AMOA.

In all the states, Shaffer spoke about the Wayne Hesch Scholarship Program; two scholarships were awarded in Minnesota, six in Wisconsin, and four in Illinois.

The dates of the Ohio Coin Machine Association (OCMA) Meeting conflicted with those of the ICMOA, so David George of Bell Music Co., OCMA President, stood in for Shaffer. ▲

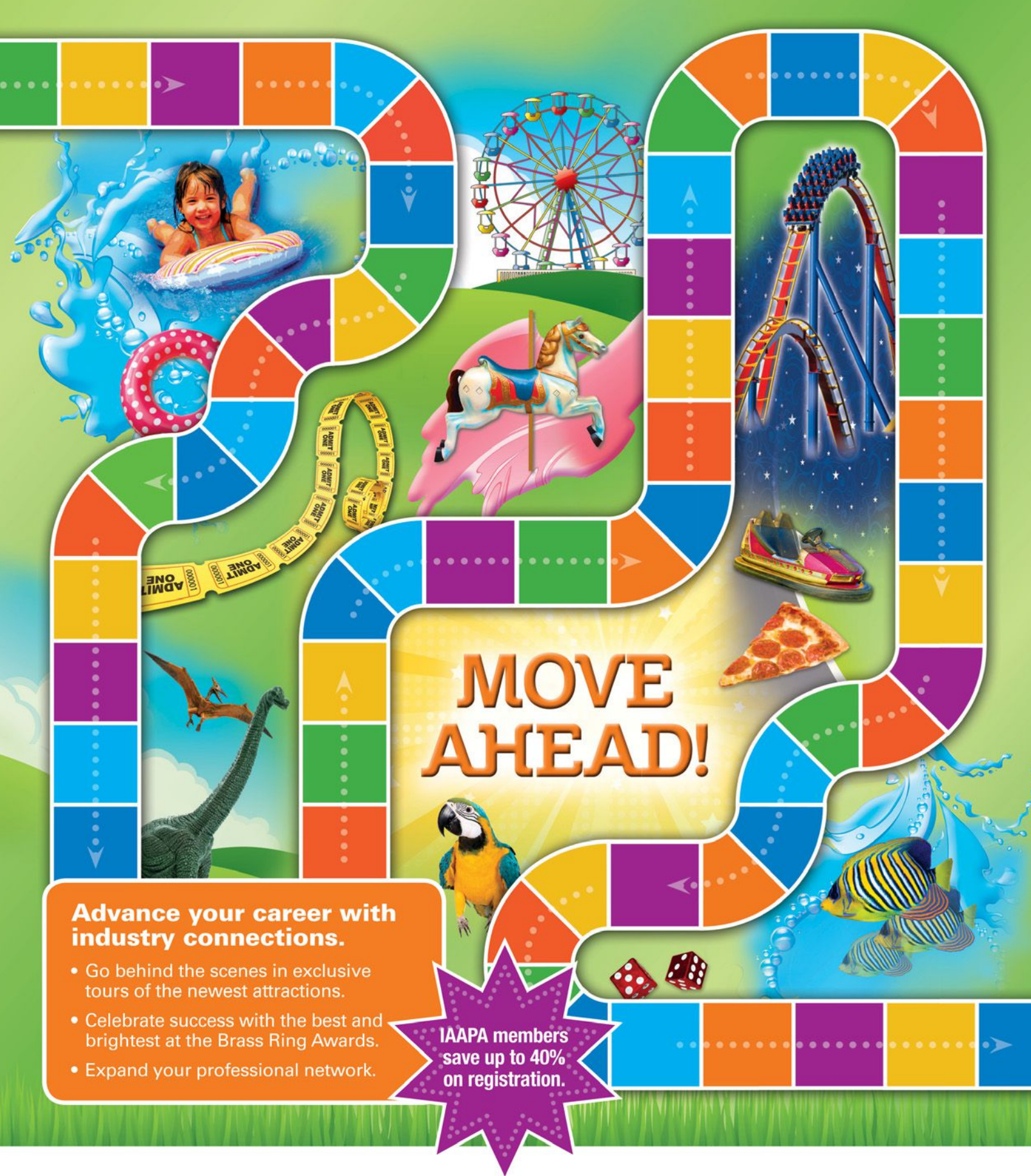
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August 6-10

AAMA Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala

Lisle, Ill.
Wyndham Lisle
tel: (847)290-9088
e-mail: information@coin-op.org
web: www.coin-op.org

August 17-18

Missouri AMOA Annual Meeting

Lake of the Ozarks, Mo.
The Inn at Grand Glaize
tel: (417)831-0405 or (816)231-6600
fax: (417)831-5479 or (816)231-6599
e-mail: klee@kinneybilliards.com

August 22

Michigan Coin Machine Operators Association Meeting

Plymouth, Mich.
tel: (517)377-0848
e-mail: administrator@mcmoa.com
web: www.mcmoa.com

September 11-14

Las Vegas Souvenir & Resort Gift Show

Las Vegas, Nev.
Las Vegas Convention Center
tel: (800)318-2238
e-mail: lglosson@urban-expo.com
web: www.urban-expo.com

September 23-25

GTI Asia China Expo

Guangzhou, China
China Import and Export Fair Pazhou Complex
tel: +866-2-27607407-10
e-mail: gametime@taiwanslot.com.tw
web: www.gtiexpo.com.tw/cnen/

October 1-4

G2E

Las Vegas, Nev.
Sands Expo and Convention Center
tel: (703)840-5662
e-mail: inquiry@reedexpo.com
web: www.globalgamingexpo.com

October 3-4

World Waterpark Symposium and Trade Show

Las Vegas, Nev.
Paris Hotel
tel: (913)381-6734
e-mail: patty@waterparks.org
web: www.waterparks.org

October 7-10

NACS Show

Las Vegas, Nev.
Las Vegas Convention Center
tel: (877)684-3600
e-mail: show@nacsonline.com
web: www.nacsonline.com

October 9-11

Euro Attractions Show

Berlin, Germany
Messe Berlin
tel: (703)836-4800
e-mail: europe@iaapa.org
web: www.iaapa.org/eas

October 17-19

ENADA Rome

Rome, Italy
Roma Expo Center
tel: 39(0)541-744250
e-mail: s.bodelini@riminifiera.it
web: www.enada.it

October 17-21

Pinball Expo

Wheeling, Ill.
Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel
tel: (800)323-3547
e-mail: brkpinball@hotmail.com
web: www.pinballexpo.net

October 18-20

Surexpo

Warsaw, Poland
tel: 48-71-359-6271
e-mail: office@wigor.wroc.pl
web: www.wigor-targi.com

October 24-26

RAAPA Autumn Expo

Moscow, Russia
VVC, Pavilion 55
tel/fax: +7(495)234-52-42
e-mail: raapa@raapa.ru
web: www.raapa.ru

November 1-3

China Zhongshan International Games & Amusement Fair

Zhongshan, China
Zhongshan Expo Center
tel: +86-20-2831-4758
e-mail: marketing1@grandeurhk.com
web: www.zsgaf.com

November 12-16 PM

IAAPA Attractions Expo

Orlando, Fla.
Orange County Convention Center
tel: (703)836-4800
e-mail: iaapa@iaapa.org
web: www.iaapa.org

November 13-15

NAMA CoffeeTea&Water

Hyatt Regency Hotel
New Orleans, La.
tel: (616)299-6483
fax: (312)704-4140
web: www.vending.org

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for participating in *Play Meter's* Electronic Version of the Equipment Poll Ballot.

Responses have been very successful!

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
VIDEOGAMES			
1. Golden Tee LIVE 2012/IT G	7.58	536	26.76
2. Fast & Furious Drift/Raw Thrills-Betson G	6.60	249	12.45
3. BB World/Raw Thrills/Play Mech-Betson G	6.40	246	12.30
4. Target Terror Gold/Raw Thrills-Betson G	6.30	321	16.05
5. S.F. Rush 2049 Spec. Ed/Betson G	6.20	381	19.05
6. Big Buck Hunter-Call of the Wild/IT Y	6.31	1266	18.31
7. Arctic Thunder Update/Betson G	6.27	1660	21.13
8. Power Putt/IT G	6.25	413	11.27
9. Silver Strike LIVE 2010/IT G	6.11	246	12.68
10. BBH Open Season/R.Thrills-Play Mech-Bet Y	6.10	971	14.08
11. Golden Tee LIVE 2012/IT G	6.00	267	13.35
12. Big Buck Hunter II/IT Y	5.58	1752	16.90
13. UltraCade/Global VR G	6.20	100	7.00
14. Virtua Tennis/Sega G*	6.20	304	9.86
15. Silver Strike Bowl/IT G	5.19	1558	22.54
16. Target Terror Gold/Raw Thrills-Betson G	6.30	321	16.05
17. GT Force Complete/IT G	6.30	413	11.27
18. Golden Tee LIVE 2012/IT G	6.00	267	13.35
VIDEOGAMES CONTINUED			
1. Terminator Salvation 42"/Play Mech-Betson Y	8.14	1389	19.72
2. Fast & Furious Drift/Raw Thrills-Betson G*	7.50	237	8.45
3. BB World/Raw Thrills/Play Mech-Betson G	7.50	81	8.45
4. Target Terror Gold/Raw Thrills-Betson G	7.27	847	21.13
5. S.F. Rush 2049 Spec. Ed/Betson G	7.20	211	7.04
6. Golden Tee LIVE 2012/IT G	7.16	509	45.07
7. Big Buck HD RawThrills-Play Mech-Bet Y-tie	7.00	97	11.27
8. Blazing Angels/Global VR Y-tie	7.00	120	7.04
9. Power Putt LIVE/In. Tech. G*	6.88	39	11.27
10. Let's Go Island/Sega G*	6.86	304	9.86
11. Time Crisis 4/Namco B	6.83	2607	16.90
12. Guitar Hero Arcade/R.Thrills-Bet-Kon-Act G*	6.65	975	23.94
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1. The Lord of the Rings/Stern Pinball	7.60	3565	7.04
2. Indiana Jones/Stern Pinball -tie	6.80	1362	7.04
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4. Disney's Pirates of Caribbean/Stern Pinball	6.75	3465	11.27
5. Attack From Mars/Bally	6.71	4117	9.86
6. The Simpsons-Pinball	6.36	5850	15.49
7. Elvis/Stern Pinball	6.29	1023	9.86
8. Avatar/Stern Pinball	6.00	3625	8.45
9. Family Guy/Stern Pinball	6.00	3625	8.45
10. NASCAR/Stern Pinball*	5.71	770	9.86
PINBALLS CONTINUED			
1. Dead Heat/Namco G	8.22	571	12.68
2. Super Bikes/Raw Thrills-Betson G	8.14	749	9.86
3. BB World/Raw Thrills/Play Mech-Betson G	7.74	408	4.08
4. Fast and Furious Drift/Raw Thrills-Betson G	7.42	3161	26.76
5. H2 Overdrive/Raw Thrills-Betson G	7.27	1611	21.13
6. Fast and Furious /Raw Thrills-Betson G	7.04	4081	33.80
7. BB Safari Deluxe/R.Thrills-P.Mech-Bet G-tie	7.00	1449	23.94
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G=Suitable for all ages
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R=Strong (Animated or lifelike violence, sexual content or language)

Point Value

An average of the ratings that operators give each game the equipment poll ballots.

Longevity Points

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Percentage of Response

Amount of respondents who rated the games.
 * New or reappearing games ** Play Meter Reader Survey

Play Meter

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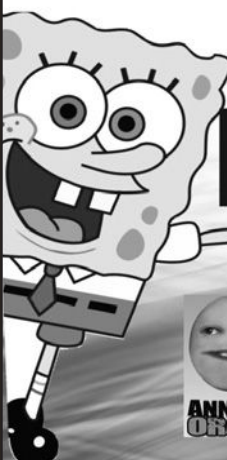
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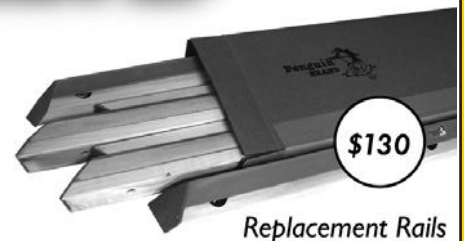
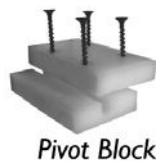
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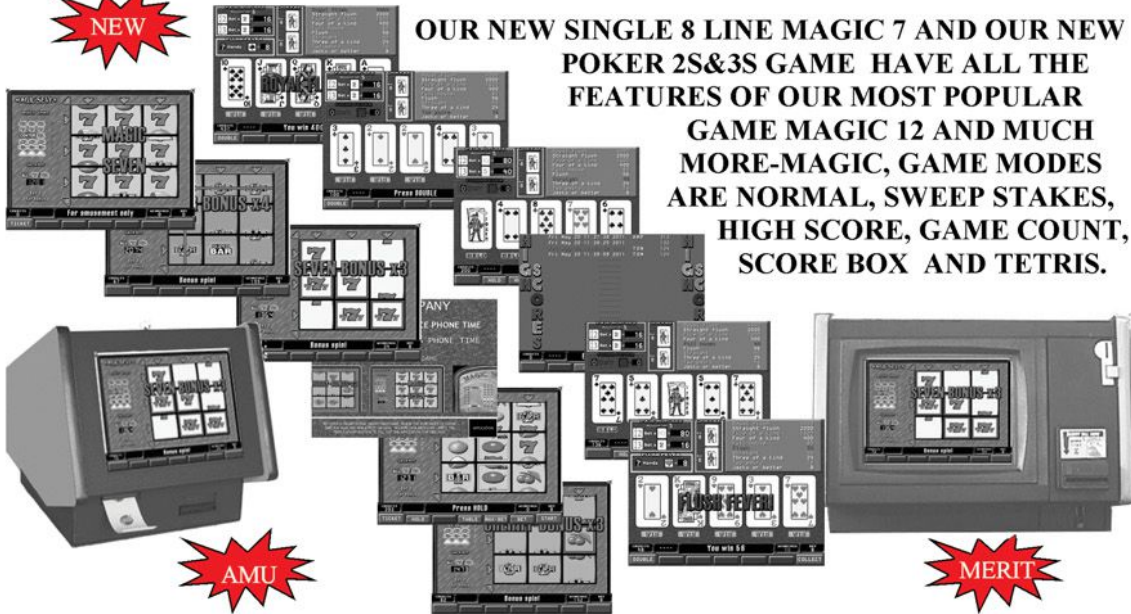
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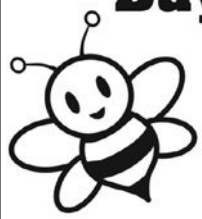
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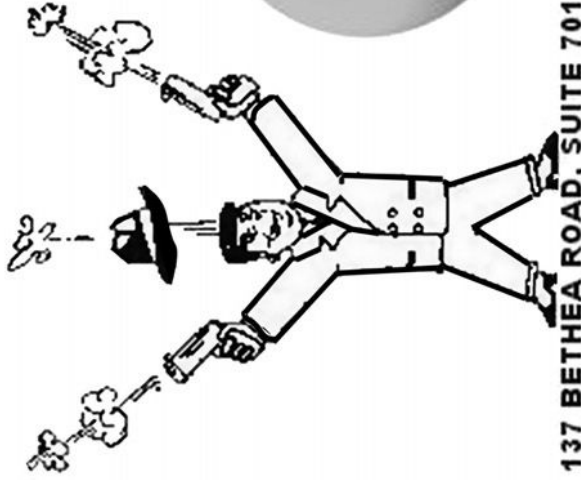


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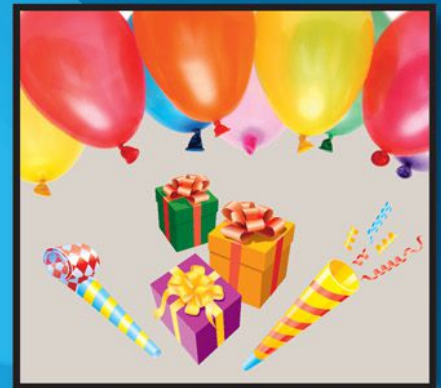
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