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8:00am - 12:00pm

Membership Committee
2:00pm - 3:30pm

AAMCF Board
3:45pm - 5:15pm

BBQ & Bowling
6:00pm - 9:00pm

Wednesday, August 8

Industry Promotion Committee
9:00am - 10:30am

Government Relations Committee
10:45am - 12:15pm

AAMA Board
2:00pm - 5:00pm

Welcome Dinner
6:00pm - 9:00pm

Thursday, August 9

Manufacturer Presentations
9:00am - 5:00pm
(Schedule coming soon)

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5:30pm - 9:30pm

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In this new monthly column, we'll catch up with the current AMOA president and hear about his travels throughout the country to meet with state associations.

44 NAMA OneShow

The NAMA OneShow was a showcase for everything related to vending, from office coffee service (OCS) to full-line foodservice. The event included exhibits, awards, an education program, and a special announcement.

60 Tax Topics

Mark Battersby discusses a number of tax provisions that affect coin-op businesses and their owners. These provisions have either expired or are set to expire soon. Learn about pertinent write-offs, payroll tax cuts, hiring incentives, and more.

On the cover

In the middle of the Great Depression, Humbert S. Betti Sr. began a jukebox operating route that later became Betson Enterprises. Today that company has grown into a dynamic force in all areas coin-op. *Play Meter* spoke with Peter Betti, Chairman and CEO, to discuss the company's secrets to longevity.

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Play Meter has transitioned to an electronic Operators' Choice Equipment Poll that operators will find convenient and easy to use, thereby providing an even truer picture of equipment performance direct from the field.

The Operators' Choice Equipment Poll is one of the most important elements of the magazine and streamlining the participation process will be beneficial to all. As more and more daily business is conducted online, the progression to an electronic ballot is a natural fit.

Operators are always looking for more efficient ways to accomplish their goals, and for game evaluation this is the answer. Operators who would like to be assured of receiving *Play Meter's* electronic equipment poll should e-mail (editorial@playmeter.net) to be placed on the contact list for the monthly poll.

I can remember being at a state association meeting years ago when a panel of manufacturer representatives was amazed to see how many operators raised their hands in affirmation when asked if they closely check industry equipment poll results.

Responding to the Operators' Choice Equipment Poll is one of the best ways to help yourself and the industry as a whole identify which games are currently performing well, which games have longevity, and which games have the highest percentage of responses from the operating community (an instant gauge of popularity).

New releases and older equipment are on the list because no route is composed solely of the latest games or solely of older games. Our poll reflects the reality of the marketplace: operators are keeping games on location longer and being cautious with new purchases. They are taking a wait-and-see approach for those big ticket items.

If the excitement of the Amusement Expo 2012 in March is any indication, and the new product introductions, those purse strings are loosening up and more investment in equipment is taking place.

The Operators' Choice Equipment Poll is among many considerations when choosing equipment. Knowing your customer base and their preferences is vitally important in choosing the games that will draw the most attention and repeat plays, and therefore generate the highest revenue.

The Operators' Choice Equipment Poll has always been among the highest rated regular features in *Play Meter*. It's the place where you can reap the benefit of input from operators all over the country compiled into easy listings.

Play Meter extends a big thank-you to all the operators who have filled out the physical monthly ballot mailed to their businesses and dutifully sent it back. We hope you will find the electronic version to save time and generate even more consistent results.

Play Meter is here to serve the industry as we have done since our first issue in December 1974. While much has changed in 38 years, some things have remained constant: providing quality service and selecting a mix of appealing games with a solid return on investment (ROI) are paramount. ▲



BONNIE THEARD
Editor

We want to hear from you about any of the articles in this issue or topics you'd like to see.
E-mail:
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Summer's here and what attraction is hotter than go-karts? We've gathered a list of four go-kart manufacturers that have something for every facility.

TARGET: Go-Karts

Amusement Products

(800)438-3558 • www.amusementproducts.com

With 20 go-kart styles available, Amusement Products is sure to have just the make and model to make your track sizzle. The company began with the Pacer in 1979 and continues to refine the model each year for possible improvements.

Formula K Raceway

(800)873-0291 • www.formulak.com

Formula K Raceway has 16 different models of go-karts and kiddie karts to suit all ages. The company also provides parts for concession karts and custom made parts. Indoor karts can be powered with electric, gas, or methanol.

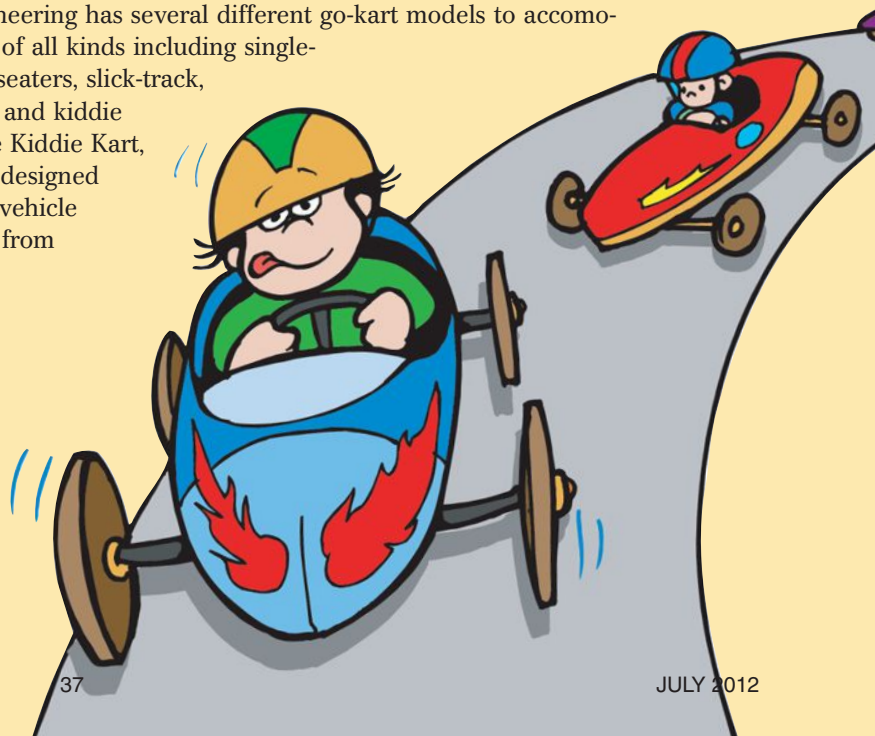
J&J Amusements (800)854-3140 • www.jjamusements.com

J&J Amusements has a variety of go-kart models: single-seat, double-seat, and junior karts. Some karts are available with optional electric power. Unique features include several "bodyless" designs and sports car designs.

Shaller Engineering

(979)743-3892 • www.shaller.com

Shaller Engineering has several different go-kart models to accommodate clientele of all kinds including single-seaters, two-seaters, slick-track, rookie karts, and kiddie karts. On the Kiddie Kart, the clutch is designed to slip if the vehicle is prevented from moving. ▲



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Kathleen Kuryliw and
Dave Romano



Kathleen Kuryliw

Make well-informed decisions before embarking on a major entertainment project.

Kathleen Kuryliw is the Marketing Coordinator for International Play Company; Dave Romano is the Sales Operation Manager. Kuryliw and Romano can be reached at (sales@playco.com).

Do you have what it takes to develop an FEC?

There are three main factors that play an important role in establishing a successful family entertainment center (FEC).

Following is an outline of what it takes personally for an individual and what important information should be considered before you commit to a business project of this nature.

MENTAL DEDICATION

The business of making children happy is a pleasurable occupation. However, this thought cannot be the only factor when founding an FEC.

The many operational issues of managing an FEC will occupy most of your time. Some basic managing duties include: sales, marketing, customer relations, human resources, account reconciliation, inventory control, maintenance, quality control, security, and fund raising.

Ninety-five percent of all customer problems arise from the parent's dissatisfaction with the operation, whether it is warranted or not. Children are easily entertained in comparison to their parents, but the parents are the ones paying for the experience.

You must approach this endeavor with every intention of spending long hours daily overseeing the day to day operations, always working towards perfecting your final vision.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

The project planning and financial outline for your business, which includes location demographics, projected start up costs, projected operating costs, projected revenues, and the projected ROI necessary to reach your financial goals must be determined before any preliminary designs for your project are established.

The next stage is to secure the necessary funding or financing for your project. Your FEC's size, quality, and the specific elements incorporated within the facility will be pre-determined based on your set budget.

Do not find yourself in the position where you are relying on funds that are yet to be secured. It is all too common for potential financial backers to pull out and leave you with lease commitments, orders for product, equipment, and other costs with you overextended and under-funded.

TIME INVESTMENT

This is YOUR center, plan to spend long hours there before, during, and after construction is complete. Every aspect of production, construction, design, managing, and opening an FEC must be taken into account.

It will require your ability to make educated, decisive ownership and management decisions. The operational goal is to streamline the operations of the facility and create a highly profitable center.

Education, preparation, and planning all take time but are absolutely necessary to meet the demands of running your own business in any industry, but are even more important when you are opening a hospitality and entertainment business.

Opening your own business will always be a calculated risk. With proper guidance and industry education, opening an FEC can be a very profitable investment. With the help of companies that have experience within this industry you can access the proper information and gain the know-how required to help make well-informed decisions. ▲



COINMAN

Michael Martinez



N2 Amusements
Brea, Calif.

Applying military processes to the business world, learning from industry veterans, and utilizing new technologies are hallmarks of this California operator's success.

The Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) elected nine new members to its Board of Directors this spring. Michael Martinez of N2 Amusements in Brea, Calif., is one of those newcomers.

Martinez and his partner Hal Riseling opened N2 Amusements in December 2008 after conducting extensive industry research and attending both the spring and fall coin-op shows that year.

It's refreshing to see new companies join the coin machine community. What made them choose to invest in coin-op? Martinez said, "We had been assessing businesses and industries for about five years. We wanted to do something entrepreneurial, something different."

He continued, "We saw potential. We had the benefit of looking at something with fresh eyes. While profit margins are not what they once were, compared to other industries it is still a profitable business."

Martinez and Riseling have backgrounds in food and beverage industries (Martinez with Con Agra Foods and Riseling in the grocery industry) and military experience.

Their skill sets have been advantageous in establishing a coin-op company. "Our organizational experience in the military has served us well," said Martinez. "We've applied military processes to the business world. When

we go on a service call we are well prepared."

MUSIC AND MORE

N2 Amusements started with TouchTunes Interactive Networks digital jukeboxes because Martinez and Riseling saw that digital jukeboxes as a category of equipment was underdeveloped in Southern California.

Martinez credits Evan Steiner, the TouchTunes West Coast Sales Manager at the time, for being welcoming and helpful.

Networking at the trade shows was also a plus, notably meeting Andy Shaffer of Shaffer Services in Ohio, President of AMOA; Donovan Fremin of Delta Music in Louisiana, immediate Past President of AMOA; Brian and Mike Lee of Automatic Coin Vending in Pennsylvania; and Michael Guthrie of Cypress Advantage in Washington. Lee and Guthrie are also new on the AMOA Board of Directors.

In addition, as a new member of the AMOA Board of Directors, Martinez is also learning from his mentor in the association, Gaines Butler of Metro Distributors in Georgia.

While N2 began with jukeboxes, it quickly added other staples: pool tables from Global Billiard Mfg. and Valley-Dynamo, countertop games from AMI and JVL, ATMs, and some Golden Tee Golf games from Incredible Technologies.

By Bonnie Theard



How have location patrons taken to the new TouchTunes jukebox features like photo booth and karaoke in his market? Martinez said, “Karaoke is in its infancy, but the photo booth feature is taking off and the mobile app is the biggest phenomenon as far as audience acceptance. We see the sales using the mobile app as added sales we would not have received before.”

N2 uses social media extensively to communicate with locations and gain referrals through Facebook, Twitter, and e-mail. Martinez advises: “You need to stay in the top of the mind of your customers.”

One key to success for the young company can be found in a comment from Martinez: “We constantly look at how we can add value to our locations.”

RELATIONSHIPS

When asked about the greatest benefits of becoming active in AMOA, Martinez said, “The benefits are networking and learning what works well in other parts of the country. Having access to business ideas from people who have a long industry history and experience is very important.”

He added, “What I can bring to AMOA are organizational, marketing, and communication skills; enthusiasm; and a can-do attitude. These skills are important in any organization.”

“When you develop relationships you become like family. I’ve observed that the association is like a family.”

“Having access to business ideas from people who have a long industry history is very important.”



At the AMOA State Meeting 2012: (standing) Michael Martinez; (seated) Mark Dittman of California (I) and Alan Chaffee of Arizona.

His first taste of that family came at the AMOA Council of Affiliated States Meeting in February in Phoenix. Martinez commented, “I was impressed and pleased with the level of openness of operators across the country at that meeting, and their willingness to help others.”

Each member of the AMOA Board of Directors serves on multiple committees. Martinez has been assigned to five committees, among them jukebox promotion, marketing, and state associations. Martinez would like to help boost AMOA membership among California operators.

For more information on N2 Amusements, visit (www.n2amusements.com). ▲

Entertainment hub in Arizona

Freedom Station in Prescott Valley, Ariz., is the brainchild of Chad and Brenda Cook, two industry veterans with over 21 years of experience. The facility, which features a host of indoor and outdoor attractions, has become an entertainment hub for families in and around Prescott Valley.

Chad Cook grew up in the industry, working at his father's Golf and Games Fun Center as a boy. After college and a brief stint in the automotive industry, he returned to the amusement business and operated facilities in Prescott Valley and Scottsdale. The Cooks have owned Freedom Station for seven years.

Freedom Station is located inside Prescott Valley's "entertainment district." Surrounding the facility is a 14-screen movie theater, restaurants like Chilli's and Buffalo Wild Wings, a video rental place, and more. An event center is located a stone's throw from the facility's back door. Concerts are frequently hosted there. Pop star Lady Antebellum recently performed at the event center and later stopped by Freedom Station for a round of mini golf.

Chad said locals from a 30-mile radius make up most of the guest demographics. During the summertime, many flock to the elevated area because Prescott Valley can be a remarkable 25 degrees cooler than the surrounding valley on a hot day.

The main indoor attraction at Freedom Station is the game room. Over 60 redemption and video games round out the mix of equipment. Many of the games are linked. The redemption counter is stocked with prizes for all ages.

Chad said, "The game room is by far our most popular attraction. It comprises about 65 percent of revenue for the attraction mix. Kids play for popular items like 8 ball slime, Cruiser bicycles, giant candy, Chinese finger traps,

novelty items, and more."

Other indoor attractions include Creative Works' Lazer Maze, an In-Motion motion simulator ride, a three story modular play structure called Freedom Freddie's Play House by International Play Company, a rock wall by Extreme Engineering, and a cafe that features typical amusement fare.

Outside, the facility has a covered patio where concerts and other events are hosted. The main outdoor attrac-

tion, however, is the elaborate mini golf course, which is Wild West-themed and features waterfalls and a large rock replica of Thumb Butte.

Chad described additional features of the course, "One of the most notorious aspects of this area is the railroad so we worked that into the theme. Prescott was built upon the gold mining boom and there's a gold-mining-boom-era mansion nearby called the Barlow Massicks House. We've got a reproduction of that scene on the golf course. Other scenes include high plains, a buffalo, and a large arch."

The facility also has a selection of around 30 inflatables that is rotated outdoors during nice weather.

The owners pride themselves on the facility's "remarkable" birthday parties. Owners Chad and Brenda make it a point to interview the child and the family to discover their favorite colors, smells, etc., and then incorporate those elements into a personalized party experience.

Four themed rooms create the perfect backdrop for parties. The log cabin room has black lights that create the facade of a fire glowing outside. The garden party room features a white picket fence and bright colors and perfect for girls. The speedway room has black and white checkered floors and tables. Harley Davidsons, Corvettes, and trains are painted on the wall. The carnival room feature old style carnival games and prizes. Party attendees in the carnival room compete for prizes and are all allowed to choose one item.

As far as advertising goes, Freedom Station is a big proponent of social media.

Chad said, "We definitely use Facebook and Twitter. We're in the process of constructing a new Web site that will link to all the different social media apps. Our Web site is an important tool. People will be able to book online, download coupons, apply for jobs, submit requests for donations online, and more. We've also done a few Facebook campaigns, which we've had a lot of fun with."

A family entertainment center (FEC) can be a rewarding, fun, and lucrative business venture. Chad had this advice for anyone starting out, "For 21 years I've seen a lot of people get started in this business because the allure seems so wholesome and fun. I'd advise anyone getting started to do your homework, do your homework, and do more homework. Don't copy a contract and think it will work. There are many pros in our industry that know what they're doing. I think it's a good time right now. Because of the way the economy is, leasing is easier. But you've got to do your homework." ▲

vital statistics

Facility:

Freedom Station

Location:

Prescott Valley, Ariz.

Attractions:

Game room, mini golf, Lazer Maze, modular playground, rock wall, inflatables

Contact:

(928)775-4040; (www.freedomstationfun.com)



Jim Chapman



Capture summertime business by reaching out and accomodating summertime sports leagues, parents, and camp counselors.

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).

Tips for a rainy day



TIP ONE

The summer is here...rain outs are guaranteed to happen to outdoor camps once or twice over the summer. Create a flyer that shows you are there for your customers when their plans become a wash. Although you may have not secured their business for whatever reason, show them you are there for them when their plans do not work out. You will be amazed at how often you will gain their business the next time they plan their field trip.

TIP TWO

How do you treat the parents of children who get dropped off for a birthday party? Treat them as well as you would the birthday mom. Develop a handout for them that outlines your party packages, explains online booking options, and has a coupon for a discount to bring their family back again after the party. Give this to every mom and dad that comes in.

This will increase your birthday party bookings and bring that entire family back to your location after attending the birthday party. Remember, a mom will have an impression of

your facility after dropping her child off, so take advantage of this to secure her next party. You may even want to give a small discount if they book their party right then and there!

TIP THREE

Are you booking any parties with the coaches of youth baseball teams? The games are starting so get in touch now to book their end of the season party. Better yet, if they wear their uniform after the game, give them half off on a pizza. Go after this business, as many of your competitors are not.

TIP FOUR

Do you have a summer promotion that will create a real buzz? How about adding a mascot to your team? My dear friends at Badger Sports in Appleton, Wis., have added Bucky to their team and the kids have gone crazy over him. You will find him riding go-karts, in the batting cages, playing laser tag, and even playing cranes! They will have him showing up at events around town as well. Check out their Facebook page to see the excitement! ▲

People and products *make the difference at Betson*

The year was 1934, the middle of the Great Depression. Dust storms were raging in the Midwest. Unemployment was 22 percent. The average wage per year was \$1,600, while the average cost of a new house was \$5,970. A gallon of gas cost 10 cents; a loaf of bread, eight cents.

Against this backdrop, Italian immigrant Humbert S. Betti Sr. closed his New York restaurant and began a jukebox operating route, H. Betti and Sons. His son, Humbert “Bert” Betti Jr., along with his brothers Hugh, Ed, and Lou worked for their father as teenagers and young men. After World War II, when the four brothers rejoined the company following their military service, the company began to expand its route to include amusement and vending.

Bumper pool “Fascination” tables were booming in 1955 and H.S. Betti Sr., who had by then retired to Italy, uncovered a source for the slate tops they required. The company they formed to import them, Eastern Novelty Distributors, started with just one employee.

The 1960s saw expansion of the routes, with well over 500 jukeboxes on location. The movie “The Hustler” created a mania for pool tables and the billiard industry thrived. It also saw the creation of Betson Enterprises, which started out jobbing pinballs and jukeboxes as well as distributing pool tables. In 1969 the brothers partnered with Bob Portale and opened a distributorship in Los Angeles.

In 1971 H. Betti Industries Inc. was formed. H. Betti and Sons; Betson Vending; the renamed billiard division, Impe-



Technical Support

Betson Enterprises has served the needs of the coin machine industry for nearly eight decades.

rial International; and Betson Enterprises, became its operating divisions.

In 1980 Bert decided to concentrate on the distribution and billiard divisions. The operating routes were sold off. After the video game boom cooled, a slow but steady expansion in distribution began. Seeing the potential in the crane business, Betson entered into a partnership with the Belgian company Elaut to distribute the “Big Choice” line of cranes in the U.S. In 1986 the New England Coin-Op (NECO) office opened in the Boston area under the leadership of Rick Kirby.

In 1992 Bert and Hugh retired and

Peter Betti became Chairman and CEO. Offices were opened in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia in 1992 and 1994. In 1998 the West Coast distributorship, Betson Pacific, came under the HBI umbrella. Bob Geschine stepped into the role of President and CFO in 1999. The 2000’s saw expansion into Baltimore, Texas, Chicago, and Atlanta, and in 2011, Orlando.

Throughout its 78-year history the company has evolved, adjusted to market changes, offered a diverse portfolio of equipment, and achieved that to which all aspire: staying ahead of the entertainment curve.

By Bonnie Theard



Accounting Department



Customer Service Department



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Imperial Sales Team

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY

Play Meter caught up with Peter Betti, Chairman and CEO, to find out more about the Betson business philosophy that has contributed to the company's remarkable longevity.

"From a business standpoint, we've always emphasized fiscal conservatism," said Betti. "That's something my father learned from his father, and I learned from him. You take prudent risks, but you never bet the business. We've taken risks as opportunities became available, but we try to keep some powder dry as reserve for additional opportunities down the road."

He added, "In any of our businesses we follow the philosophy that there is

an unspoken partnership between us and our customers, and between us and our suppliers. We are basically teaming with them to do something productive. We are in business to make money, but making money is a function of satisfying our customers and supporting our suppliers. If you take care of that, and create a good work environment for your employees, you will be successful."

Betti came on board full time in 1971 when Betson had one office, Imperial had two offices, and there were 25 employees. Now there are a total of 13 offices, including headquarters in Carlstadt, N.J., and 235 employees.

Betti will celebrate his 50th year

with the company in 2013. As a teenager he worked on vending trucks and helped to deliver equipment for Betson. He received his first pay envelope in 1963. Once he got his driver's license he worked with three route men who had 10 routes each. He quickly learned every location and filled in for the route men when they were on vacation.

The industry has changed significantly in the last 50 years, but some things are constant. Betti said, "One thing I learned from my father is that the only way you can have a successful business and expand a business is to go out and find good people and give them proper direction. If you have



Sales and Marketing



Information Technology Department



Equipment Preparation and Service Department



Parts and Sales Departments

good people you'll be successful; and if you don't, you won't."

He continued, "The success of our company is our ability to find, keep, and develop good people. We never set out to be a big company. We set out to run a good business. Growth was the natural by-product."

PARTNERSHIPS

Through all the ups and downs of the industry, Betson has managed to continue that growth into new areas, and has formed partnerships with other companies to bring new product to the market. The latest collaboration is with Raw Thrills and Play Mechanix for Big Buck HD, the latest in the pop-

ular Big Buck Hunter video game series.

The first collaboration was with American Laser Games (ALG) and the Mad Dog McCree cowboy-themed gun game in 1991. "ALG came to us with a combat police training system, which we thought could be translated to a coin-op game.

Betti said, "Mad Dog McCree was very successful and reliable given the technology at the time. That and Dragon's Lair were the two highest earning single player games of all time."

Then Betson saw the success of the Miss Pac-Man/Galaga game. Betson had a strong relationship with Williams-Bally-Midway, which held the

library for Atari and Midway games. When the company exited coin-op in 2000, Betson saw an opportunity.

Betti said, "We went to them and said we wanted to reprise some of their games. It was when Mark Struhs was looking for someone to manufacture Crusin' Exotica and Arctic Thunder, which had been undersold in the marketplace. Mark obtained the license from Midway and partnered with us to build the games. The venture was quite successful."

Following that success, Betson next collaborated with Eugene Jarvis, a designer from Williams-Bally-Midway, who was full of ideas for new games. Target Terror was the first game, then



Parts and Warehouse Staff



Shipping and Receiving

The Fast and the Furious, and the rest is history.

Betti commented, “Eugene is a genius when it comes to the development of driving and shooting games. They are state of the art and have an added level of depth that keeps players coming back to learn more and play more.”

ECONOMY, TECHNOLOGY

Betson is not immune to the impact of the current economy. “Like everyone else, we have adjusted to the reality of business today. ‘Pretty good’ is the new ‘great,’” he said.

What is Betson doing to help its customers through these tough economic times? Betti replied, “We’ve consistently done the same things distributors have always done: maintained inventory in our offices, provided service, and provided financing so that people who don’t have sufficient cash flow to buy everything they want and need can pay for it over time. Our finance department, led by Kevin Fritz, is a key factor in our customers’ success.”

Betti recalled, “As a road salesman, I learned the value of good advice. As a distributor we are a source of information for our customers; we advise them on what to buy and when to buy. Utilizing the right equipment keeps them and the industry healthy. Technology is changing quickly and trying to stay in front of it is a challenge.”

Betson’s booth at trade shows is

always active, which Betti credits primarily to the equipment from Raw Thrills. He said he is seeing more entertainment-based locations in attendance at trade shows, venues that have an amusement component, whether it’s bowling lanes, a restaurant, a movie theater, or an amusement park.

“The Amusement Expo in March was probably the most upbeat show I have attended in the last four years,” said Betti. “There was more optimism and less negativity.”

He added, “The coin machine business as we know it developed during the Great Depression. While times have changed, one thing has not changed: If you come out with something that catches the public’s attention, economic conditions do not matter. The biggest challenge for our industry is to create new and exciting forms of entertainment that will capture the public’s attention.”

INTERNATIONAL EFFORT

Betson has gone international with a new office in China, which opened this spring in conjunction with Raw Thrills/Play Mechanix.

What was the catalyst to expand into the Asia Pacific Rim?

“We’ve done business internationally for years,” said Betti. “One of the reasons we are in China is to have a local interface. Bob Boals and George Petro have devoted a tremendous

amount of time and energy building our relationships there.

“The Pacific Rim represents a huge market, similar to the video game market in the U.S. in the early 1980s. We want to be closer to the market, give customers engineering support, provide Chinese translations for games, and foster better communications.”

Betti commented that most of the arcades in China were built in the last three to five years. On a recent trip to China he has seen one arcade with 800 games and another with 1,000 games. Two arcades had 50 to 60 basketball games each.

He said, “The average arcade there has 400 to 500 games, which we would view as a mega-arcade.” He added that there are few street locations in China.

GAMING

Another new venture for Betson is participation in the video gaming market that is expected to open in Illinois this year. The Video Gaming Act, which passed in July 2009 and will partner coin machine operators with the state in a mutually beneficial program, seems poised to finally be implemented.

Betson has been awarded a Video Gaming Distributor License from the Illinois Gaming Board (IGB) and will represent WMS Gaming Inc.’s video gaming terminals.

Betson has a track record in gaming.



Betson Corporate



Betson Midwest



Betson Syracuse



Betson New England



Betson West Buena Park



Betson King of Prussia



Betson Baltimore



Betson Florida



Betson Pittsburgh



Betson Southeast



Betson Hayward



Betson Texas

It represented WMS in Pennsylvania in 2006 when WMS installed slot machines in race tracks and resorts. "We think that WMS is the leader in the gaming industry and has an excellent product," said Betti.

AWARDS

Betson has received a fair share of industry accolades, the most recent being

named Distributor of the Year 2011 by the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA). The award, voted by manufacturers, was presented at the Amusement Expo in March.

Betti commented, "It's always gratifying to be recognized for your work. It's important for the local branch offices to feel that their efforts are appreciated."

The amusement industry is all about building relationships and trust. Clearly Betson has been a high achiever in that regard, which is why the company has won the Distributor of the Year award for two consecutive years. For more information on Betson, call (800)524-2343; Web (www.betson.com). ▲

Travels with the AMOA President

Andy Shaffer of Shaffer Services, President of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA), has embarked on a busy travel agenda of state meetings, conventions, and other industry events.

Play Meter will check with Shaffer monthly about his experiences and observations.

How has the transition been from First Vice President to President of AMOA?

It's been a fairly smooth and really easy transition. One of the things AMOA does a great job of is assure that all the officers are involved in the Executive Committee. I've been on executive calls at least once a month for the past few years.

The beauty of working through the chairs of AMOA as a member of the board of directors, moving up to the vice president level, and then principal officers is that generally you're well informed by the time you get in the presidential seat. You've run around the block three times by the time you get there. I haven't begun the "rockstar tour," as I call it.

How was the Oregon State Meeting?

The Oregon Amusement and Music Operators Association (OAMOA) hosted a meeting led by Jerry Johnston of Amusement Unlimited, AMOA Secretary, and Lee Prantl of Pride Vending. They spoke about lobbying efforts inside Oregon.

Twenty to 25 operators attended. In addition to myself, there were two Hesch Scholarship recipients; several manufacturers; and John Margold of AMI Entertainment, Chairman of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA).

What was the mood of operators at the meeting?

They didn't seem depressed or negative at all. There was some lightness to the meeting. It was hard to decipher because everyone was excited to get through the meeting and get on the golf course. I was very impressed with the operator base.

I'm not accustomed to how big and spread out that state is; operators are far apart from one another. The meeting was in Portland and many operators had to drive three to five hours to get there.

How many travels will you make this year?

As of right now I've got eight official state shows or meet-

ings to attend as AMOA President in the next three months. My guess is there will be a sprinkling of other state events that will pop up either during the summer or after the summer.

What do you expect the rest of the summer to be like?

We've got several big issues happening. The Chuck E. Cheese's (CEC) situation had been on my radar screen months before I became president. (In 2011 a Southern California mother filed a lawsuit against CEC claiming ticket dispensing games are illegal under California's gambling laws and promote gambling to children.)

This is very important to the coin-op industry. We want to make sure this legislation, if it's proposed, has language that is favorable to coin machine operators.

CEC is tentatively proposing that you can't award gifts or prizes worth more than \$10. Any place giving away gifts worth more than \$10 could be wiped out. Most of the prizes inside the equipment we've been buying would not be allowed.

My fear is that if CEC has to accept this to protect itself in California, then it would do it in other states. A group from AMOA and AAMA is communicating with CEC and trying to work out language that would not hinder our operations and that of family entertainment centers (FECs). They've been good, mature discussions.

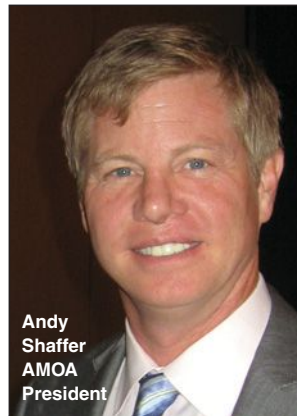
What issues are operators talking about that are important in their state?

Gaming is popping up all over the place. Ohio is a battleground right now. Racinos and casinos are beginning to open up. If the charitable pull-tabs get passed in Ohio there's a very strong case that the operating

community will be involved.

I just got word from Minnesota about proposed legislation to allow electronic charitable pull-tabs to raise funds for a new football stadium for the Vikings. The early prognosis is that the operating community will not be a part of that.

The AMOA office briefs me on what's going on but I'm trying to talk to key operators before the events in states I will visit so I can have a solid database before I walk in. It's important to me to be prepared. There's a lot of homework to be done to make my presence at the meetings worth everyone's while. ▲



Andy Shaffer
AMOA
President

"I'm trying to talk to key operators before the events in states I will visit so I can have a solid database."

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SAY WHAT?



10
second
interview
with...

Although **Emily Dunn** has a nursing background, she became involved in the amusement and vending industries in the early '80s with her late husband Tom who needed "cheap help." Her first task was ordering jukebox needles and 45s and she quickly moved to covering rails. She became deeply involved in the business over the next 10 years and after his tragic death, she took over. She says her employees are her family and she enjoys her life in the North Georgia mountains very much.

My first job was:

babysitting.

My favorite type of music is:

jukebox music!

I wish I had the nerve to:

if I had more nerve I would be in serious trouble!

One thing I can't live without is:

laughter.

The last book I read was:

The Hunger Games series.

One word that describes my personality is:

optimistic.

The best advice I ever got was:

from my late husband Tom. He said, "Be yourself!"

My favorite TV show is:

any CSI.

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

Jon Stewart.

My most cherished inanimate possession is:

my Toyota 4-Runner.

HOT CLICKS

League Associations

www.ndadarts.com



The AMOA-National Dart Association (NDA) is the official sanctioning body for the sport of soft-tip electronic darts. The emphasis of the trade association is the promotion, recognition, and standardization of league play.

www.bca-pool.com



The Billiard Congress of America (BCA) has been around since 1948. The association's objective is to enhance the success of its members and promote the game of billiards through educational programs, the International Billiard &

Home Recreation Expo, tournaments, and other programs designed to make pool everybody's game.

www.poolplayers.com



The American Poolplayers Association (APA) was founded as the National Pool League, which became the APA in 1981. The APA employs The Equalizer® handicapping and scoring system that makes it possible for players of differing

abilities to compete on an equal basis.

www.vnea.com



The Valley National 8-Ball League Association (VNEA) is an association of over 350 coin machine operators, approximately 20 supplier/manufacturers, and nearly 100,000 sanctioned pool players who work together to provide

increased interest in the game of pool. ▲



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Link up with LinkedIn

Not only a job-seeking tool, LinkedIn provides a place for professionals to network and share ideas.

In the past, I always thought LinkedIn was just a place to find a job, but as I used it more, I discovered there is much more to this social Web site.

For those of you who are not familiar with LinkedIn, here is a brief introduction. LinkedIn is a professional social networking Web site. Founded in December 2002, and launched in May 2003, it is mainly used for professional networking.

With over 100 million users representing over 200 countries around the world, LinkedIn is a fast-growing professional networking site that allows members to create business contacts, search for jobs, and find potential clients, and participate in Groups.

Individuals have the ability to create their own professional profile that can be viewed by others in

their network, and also view the profiles of their own contacts.

One purpose of LinkedIn is to enable users to maintain a contact list of people with whom they have some level of relationship, named Connections. Users can invite anyone to become a connection. This list of connections can then be used in numerous ways:

- A connection network is created by your direct connections, the connections of their connections (2nd degree), and also the connections of

second-degree connections (3rd degree).

- Users can upload their resume or create a profile in order to promote their work and community involvement.

- It can then be used to find jobs, people, and business opportunities recommended by someone in one's contact network.

- Employers can list jobs and search for potential candidates.

- Users can now follow different companies and can get notifications about offers available.

LinkedIn also has created Groups, where professionals in the same field can connect with one another and have discussions and share ideas within these groups. Working in social media, I have used these groups to

further my understanding and education of this rapidly growing industry.

Some of the benefits of attending industry trade shows are to take advantage of seminars and workshops to improve your business and learn something new or different that could increase business and revenue. We have seen a decrease in the number of trade shows in the past few years and people still need a way to share their ideas to strengthen this industry. LinkedIn Groups could possibly help in this dilemma.



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).

By starting a group or various groups, members of these groups can expand their knowledge within the industry. Manufacturers, distributors, and operators can all participate in these groups and utilize this professional networking Web site.

In order to see value in a group, sometimes you have to put yourself out there. Social media is about giving and engaging, not standing on the sidelines and watching. I encourage you to engage and please ask questions. I think engaging can be difficult for some of us. We are used to taking in information and not giving back. Remember the first rule of networking is to give.

To select the groups you will want to participate in, you can see what groups others belong to on their LinkedIn profiles. Also consider how many members are in the group. More isn't always better, but it means something.

STARTING A NEW GROUP

Before you create a group in LinkedIn, think of the topics you want your group to be about and do a little research.

- Search for those topics in the Groups Directory to see if any already exist. If the group already exists, look into the group and see if it truly relates to the one you have brainstormed.

- Investigate to see if those groups are currently active and/or if they have any members.

- Picking a name for your group is important. If you name the group after your brand or name, this may turn away potential members who don't use your brand.

- LinkedIn lists the groups you've

joined in your profile, unless you turn off the visibility setting. Make sure the name is not offensive or distracting.

■ As you think about a name and topic for your group, consider whether members would want to have the name showing in their profile.

CREATING AND PROMOTING YOUR GROUP

You should have your name and purpose of the group completed by now. Be sure to include the description of the group, and include keywords that will help people find your group.

■ First, list your new group on LinkedIn's Group Directory. Be sure to include links to valuable articles related to your topic and upcoming trade shows and industry events.

■ Be sure to post content to the group before you promote it, so people

will have an understanding of what the group is about.

■ Communicate the new group in all of your social media and Web resources. Add it to your Web site, Facebook, and Twitter. It is a great way to have a valuable status update. I would even include it on your e-mail signatures.

MAINTAINING YOUR GROUP

As the group owner, you can send e-mails to group members. Be careful on the balance of how many e-mail messages you send out to the group. Personally, I've left some groups and

changed my settings for others because they sent too many messages.

If you have created this group with someone else, you may want to assign the "group manager" role to that person to assist in maintaining the group. Group managers have the same administrative access as the group owner. The only action the manager can't do is transfer ownership and close the group.

I hope this article has helped you understand some of the benefits of LinkedIn and

how it can help you succeed as a better business. ▲

"People still need a way to share their ideas to strengthen this industry."

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Shoot to Thrill



Josh and Zach Sharpe

Stern's AC/DC Pinball brings entertainment and earnings.

Following the International Flipper Pinball Association IFPA9 World Pinball Championship, what better way to celebrate a successful event than to review Stern's latest pinball machine, AC/DC?

The band has released so many hit songs and continues to be one of the top touring bands after over 30 years in the business. For all the AC/DC fans out there that have been waiting for a pinball machine to bring justice to such an iconic band, Stern has truly rocked out with its latest creation. The company has not only brought fans a Pro version, but also Premium and Limited Edition versions to satisfy even the most diehard fan. For those about to rock, Stern and AC/DC salute you.

AC/DC/STERN PINBALL

Pros: Historically we would say Stern has done a great job of incorporating fun, fast, and relevant music in its games to accompany the action. That being said, we must say that AC/DC is hands down, one of the best, if not *the* best in terms of incorporating

music into the rules/game play.

While the list of music themed games in recent times is pretty minimal (Guns N' Roses, Elvis, and Rolling Stones come to mind), these games incorporate music as almost an "add-on." Designer Steve Ritchie and Programmer Lyman Sheats not only used 12 popular songs from the band's vast catalog, the songs are integrated into the game play perfectly. It also doesn't hurt that most if not all of AC/DC's music lends itself well to fast, adrenaline pulsing beats while playing.

From a toy perspective, the cannon adds a nice level of complexity to an already deep game. You load it and shoot at various items on the playfield while hearing some great custom speech calls.

However, what we really like about the cannon is the rules and strategy associated with it. There's a great risk/reward element if a player wants to build up a big jackpot, setting up a potential playfield multiplier to 2X or 3X first before collecting, and a great satisfaction (or frustration) of succeeding (or failing) in the set-up.

Operators will enjoy the fact that the cannon's "fire" button has been designed without the typical wires/connector. This means that the lockdown bar and playfield glass can both be removed without any additional effort.

Keeping with the toys on the playfield, the bell gets a significant upgrade on the Premium and Limited Edition models. With a captive ball hanging from below, players are actually able to smack the ball and watch as it swings back to knock the ball back into play.

The bell can also be raised by the game's software, revealing a kickout hole behind it. This kind of physical interactivity with the ball is exactly the kind of entertainment that makes pinball so magical.

While some might think it's overkill, we really like how Lyman incorporated all of the different high score tables on the display. There's a nice Pavlovian





response in pinball when you get to enter your initials for whatever reason. It's nice to have a mini scoreboard keeping track of all the high scores associated with each song in the game. It's a very nice incentive and great for bragging rights among players.

Finally, AC/DC, especially the Pro model, would do Harry Williams proud in "the ball is wild" department. With the banks of spot targets, along with the use of the cannon, the ball is constantly in an uncontrolled situation. This presents a great challenge to even the best of players to try and control that chaos, and should leave operators with confidence that ball times will be low and earnings will be high.

Cons: Similar to issues with the release of Avatar, AC/DC currently has issues with balls coming out of the jets (or from the bell) going straight down the middle.

While there is a modification available, the fact that it does not come included from the factory can cause quite the frustration, especially given how many times the ball is either coming out of the jets or coming back at you from a successful bell shot.

The cannon, while being a huge plus for the game in terms of its entertainment factor, really obscures the bottom right area of the playfield based on its placement. With balls constantly flying all over the place, the inability to see the right inlane/outlane area can be a bit frustrating when players are deciding the proper times to nudge the machine.

For the Premium and Limited Edition models, there is an additional mini playfield underneath the main playfield. While the speech and sounds really made it fun to bash on the devil character underneath, the playfield itself we found quite unplayable. With the large gap in between the flippers, we found ourselves draining more than flipping during our time spent down there. Had the playfield been a little more playable, we think it could have made for a much more positive experience.

One aspect of the Premium and



Limited Edition designs that we are not big fans of is the ramp diverter. Both ramps can feed the cannon and it takes away a ton of strategy potential when you are playing on the Pro model and trying to avoid the right ramp at all costs to NOT load the cannon.

Unfortunately on the Premium games, you can inadvertently load the cannon by shooting the left ramp, which alters what we love so much about the "standard" game and its rules.

We absolutely love the song integration and rules surrounding the implemented songs. However, if we had to describe the basic jukebox rules in regards to changing songs, we could not with definitive certainty. For new players, we can only imagine the immediate confusion and lack of clarity.

This leads to our next issue, which is the playfield inserts, and the sheer amount of features and awards that they can each stand for at any given time. The different flashing, pulsing, and solid states, really leave even the best players scratching their heads at exactly what shots are worth at any particular moment during game play.

The generic artwork takes away some

of the personality that has worked so well in other games. In a game like Batman, you have inserts that help tell the story that the player is commanding. That kind of visual roadmap is essential for making these games understandable for both casual and advanced players.

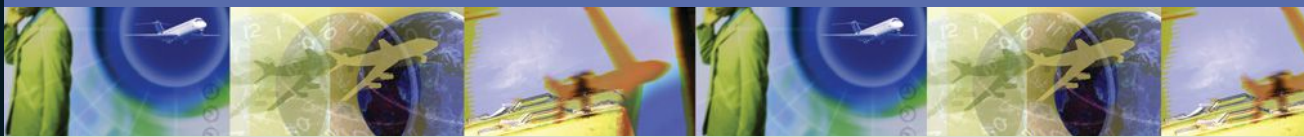
Finally, the subject of shipping games with incomplete software seems to be creeping back into play. We've had our hands on AC/DC since early February, and after seeing the progress that has been made on the software in the months to follow, we feel sorry for those operators that don't update their machines as updates become available. We've seen Stern run into trouble with the ship first, update later strategy.

Overall: The mix of interesting rules along with a playfield that lends itself to uncontrolled play make AC/DC our favorite Stern game to come out in quite some time. The depth of the rules allows for novice players to focus on reaching the multiballs, firing the cannon, and smacking the bell to the sounds of their favorite AC/DC song, while better players, including ourselves, are still figuring out scoring strategies months after the game's release.

While there are some confusing moments trying to follow some of the rules, and some frustrating moments from some of the playfield design choices, AC/DC proves to be simply a blast to play. Operators can be confident that players are getting a ton of entertainment for a game that is proving to have short ball times, which is the best combination for pinball to be a winner for any location.

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.



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Schaumburg, Ill.
Renaissance Chicago/Schaumburg Hotel & Convention Center
tel: (303)243-5070 or (708)226-1300
e-mail: expo@bca-pool.com or info@wtglasgow.com
web: www.bcasummit.com

July 19-21

Amusement and Music Operators of Texas Convention

Ft. Worth, Texas
Radisson Fossil Creek Hotel
tel: (512)472-1043
e-mail: amot@amot.org
web: www.amot.org

July 20-21

Montana Coin Machine Operators Association Meeting

Fairmont, Mont.
Fairmont Hot Springs
tel: (406)442-7088
fax: (406)442-0098
e-mail: ccwar@aol.com

July 24-26

SALEX

Sao Paulo, Brazil
Transamerica Expo Center
tel: +55(11)3836-3271
web: www.salex.com.br

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.tw
web: www.gtiexpo.com.tw

October 1-4

G2E

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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

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Las Vegas Convention Center
tel: (877)684-3600
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web: www.nacsonline.com

October 9-11

Euro Attractions Show

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tel: (703)836-4800
e-mail: europe@iaapa.org
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October 16-18

ENADA Rome

Rome, Italy
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October 17-21

Pinball Expo

Wheeling, Ill.
Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel
tel: (800)323-3547
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November 12-16

IAAPA Attractions Expo

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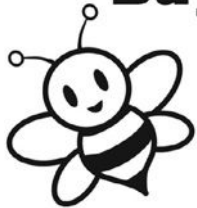
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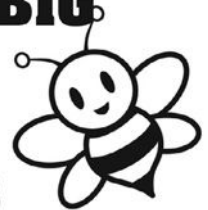


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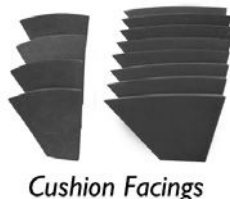
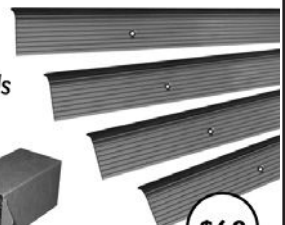
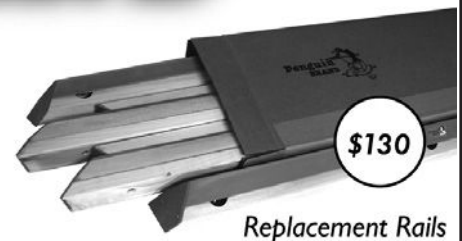
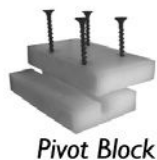
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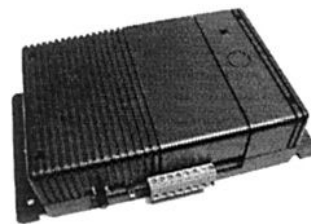
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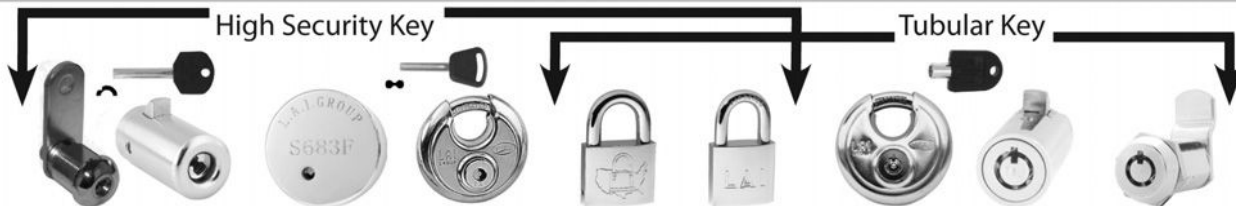
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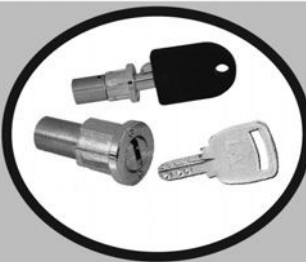
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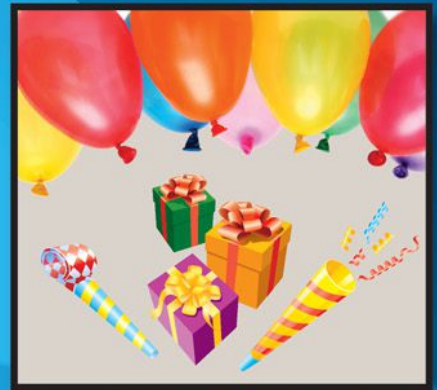
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