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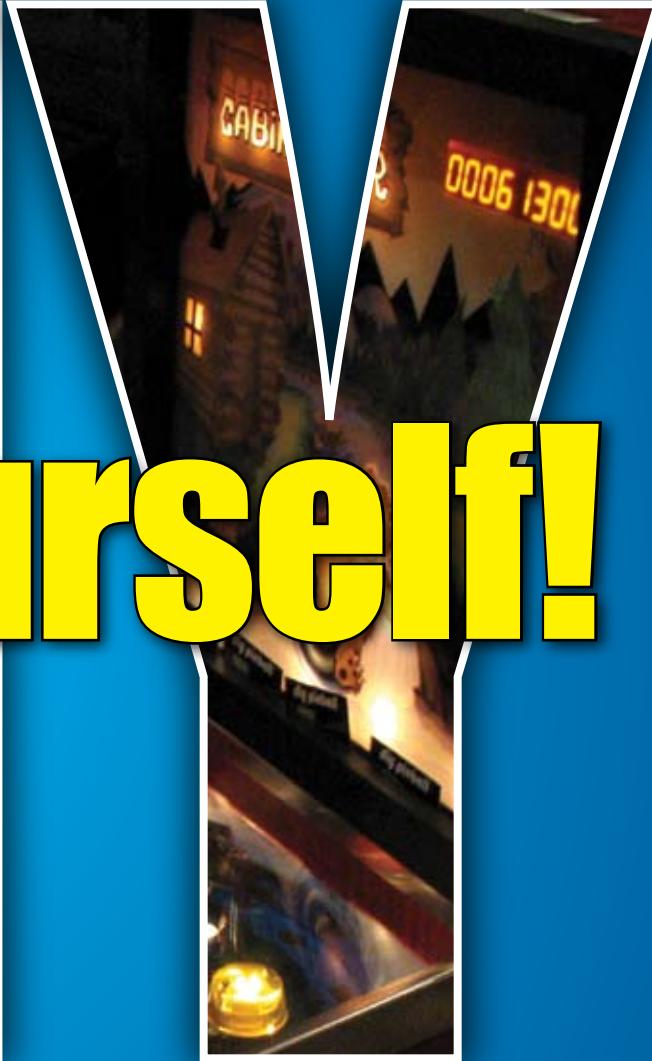
GAMEROOM

May 2007 Volume 19, Number 5

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Roto Pool	Gypsy Queen	...and more

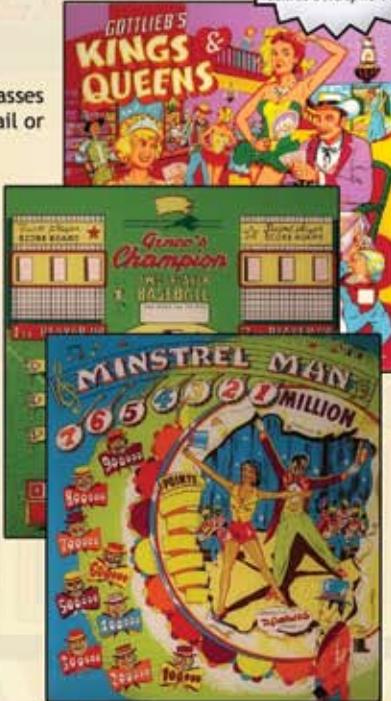
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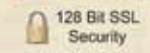
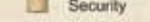
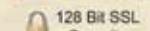
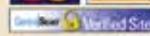
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Advance
Information

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CHAOS CENTRAL

Sometimes the only way to find that perfect game room toy is to just go ahead and build it yourself

The “Do It Yourself” DIY spirit has always been a big part of the game room community. After all, it’s a safe assumption that most game rooms do not come fully furnished with games, decorations, and what not. It’s always a project to build the game room of your dreams, even if it just means finding the right games and getting things set up to your liking. Some of you, however, have even built a complete game room from the ground up, starting with little more than a foundation (and sometimes not even that!)

This month GameRoom celebrates the DIY attitude with some great homemade game room creations, the first being the aptly named “DIY Pinball” project by Jeff Mathews. Jeff managed to create a fantastic “built from scratch” pinball machine, including designing his own electronics, playfield toys, and artwork, all housed in a custom “mini-cab” that’s just the perfect size for a child to play. It’s a fantastic creation, a true testament to the creative spirit of GameRoom readers.

Want more DIY? How about a great article from Jeff Lawton documenting his adventures in restoring a Bally Lido bingo pinball from almost certain death? See how he brings this pin back from a melted near-death experience. Matt Davis shows off his homebrew pinball rotisserie. If you’ve ever tried to do a playfield swap or a full “shop-out” of a pin, you know how invaluable having a rotisserie can be!

In many ways, each monthly issue of GameRoom is also a DIY labor of love: our crack team of “homebrew” writers are here each month, doing what they do best: creating great new articles for you to read! From Jonathan Imberi’s *The Many Incarnations of...*, to Rob Craig’s *Tales of the Silverball*, Dave Ellis’ *WayBack Machine*, Dan Hower’s *TAFA Classic Arcade Flyer* and Tim Ferrante and Scott Voisin’s *Auction Watch*—the columns are all here, all brand new and gleaming with a shiny new coat of paint.

I hope you enjoy this month’s issue, and if you’ll excuse me, all of this “DIY” talk has reminded me that I’ve got some game room signs to hang downstairs!



The Game is Never Over,

Kevin Steele, Editor

Yup, I’m begging. PLEASE submit your GameRoom of the Month and/or Coin Op Confessions article to info@gameroommagazine.com! As an added incentive, I’ve now got some great GameRoom T-Shirts to offer for any published submission! Take some photos, confess your addiction, and get a T-shirt for your time — thanks in advance!

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(*) - Look For That Show's Ad Inside This Issue
Dates and Locations Subject to Late Change. Contact Promoter To Confirm

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- * 5th OHIO GAS 2007 Dayton, OH Steve Staub (937) 335-7952
- * 12th AUCTION GAME SALES Winston, Salem Rick Parsons (800) 551-0660
- 26th CLASSIC COMPUTING AND GAMING SHOW (CCAG) Fairview Park, OH info@ccagshow.com

June 2007

- * 9th AUCTION GAME SALES Kingsport, TN Rick Parsons (800) 551-0660
- * 9th-10th MIDWEST GAMING CLASSIC Oconomowoc, WI Dan Loosen www.midwestgamingclassic.com

July 2007

- 28th & 29th CLASSIC GAMING EXPO Las Vegas, NV John Hardie info@cgeexpo.com

August 2007

- * 4th AUCTION GAME SALES Winston, Salem Rick Parsons (800) 551-0660
- 11th & 12th CALIFORNIA EXTREME CLASSIC ARCADE GAMES SHOW San Jose, CA info@caextreme.com

September 2007

- * 8th AUCTION GAME SALES Kingsport, TN Rick Parsons (800) 551-0660
- 21st-22nd 3RD ANNUAL HEARTLAND PINBALL & ARCADE SUPERSHOW Herrin, IL Rob Craig 618-751-8458

November 2007

- 2nd-4th VGXPO AMERICA'S VIDEOGAME EXPO Philadelphia, PA www.vgxpo.com
- 9th-11th CHICAGOLAND ADVERTISING, SLOT, & JUKEBOX SHOW St. Charles IL Kevin Greco (815) 353-1593



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JUNE

9 Indianapolis, IN

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16 Atlanta, GA area

Historic Rushton Mill, 1240 Lyndon Ave., Griffin, GA

23 Jefferson City, MO area

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30 Orlando, FL

Central Florida Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall, 4603 W. Colonial Dr.

JULY

14 Hollywood, CA area

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AUGUST

4 Saint Louis, MO area

Belle-Claire Fairgrounds, 200 S. Belt East, Belleville, IL

11 Dallas, TX area

Rodeo Center, Exhibit Hall A, 1818 Rodeo Dr., Mesquite, TX

11 San Jose, CA

In association with California Extreme

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San Jose Fairgrounds, Parkside Hall, San Jose, CA

18 Knoxville, TN

Chilhowee Park and Exposition Center

Jacob Building, 3301 Magnolia Ave., Knoxville, TN

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GAMEROOM Mailbox

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Dear GameRoom,

I have purchased a Coke Machine manufactured by the Cavalier Corporation in Chattanooga, Tn. Model number USS-8-64. Do you have any manuals and parts for this model? It runs but looks pretty bad. I would like to restore it for home use. Can you help?

Thanks,
Frederick Preston Fred116@aol.com

Can anyone help out Frederick?

There is a website worth checking out if you haven't already. It is "beachboardwalk.com". There is a video of their arcade. To find it you have to go to the casino arcade section of the website and click on the video. I went to the Amusement park in the summer of 1999. The arcade had a few rows of well kept pinball machines.

What was really cool was that there was another good-sized room next to the Merry-go-round that had about twenty more pinball machines in it. I have never seen anything about the arcade rooms at the park anywhere. It would be great if you had a contact in the Santa Cruz that could visit the park and list what pinballs they have. They had the most games on location by far that I ever saw. I would like to go back again, but they may not have the large amount of games there anymore. Maybe Gameroom could put out an article on the arcades at the park, it was very impressive in 1999, I wonder what is still there.

Sincerely, Dan Marquardt

Kevin,

My subscription expired today. I have been a subscriber since issue #1. I was not going to renew because I collect antique coin op machines. The newest machine in my collection is a Gottlieb "Gondolier" from 1958. It's not

a real popular pinball but it was my favorite growing up as a young teenager in NE Philly. I got my last issue today and was surprised to see a vintage pinball on the cover. You can thank Jimmy Rosen for this renewal.

I have noticed a lack of articles on the old stuff since Dick Bueschel passed away and left us no one to replace him. He was the backbone to my collecting knowledge and I still have every letter he wrote me. He used a lot of my photos in his books.

Gordon Hasse writes a great pinball article but not enough of them. I always wonder if our paths crossed as in his articles he played pinball in the same area of Philly as I did. I'm 63 and think Gordon around the same.

Anyway I am starved for some good articles on old jukeboxes, slot machines, trade stimulators, anything old to decorate your gameroom as all game rooms don't have video games and solid state pinballs. I guess that it is the newer breed of collectors that give you the funds to make this such a high quality magazine and I admit I did have some newer machines when my children were growing up.

If you could do just one article a month on something old I would be thrilled. Thank you Kevin, and good luck with your new magazine, and thank you Jimmy Rosen for showing the newer guys that old stuff is really COOL!!!

Eugene "Butch" Torpey

Butch, I'm glad you renewed, because I've got a nice lineup of upcoming articles about vintage machines, and hopefully I'll be able to grant your wish of at least one vintage article a month. I'm always looking for contributions from vintage coin-op enthusiasts, so if you know of anyone who had a good restoration story, or just a cool collection, please let me know!

Looks like it's that time of year for me to renew my subscription... Again! The magazine is going in a FANTASTIC direction and I am anxious to see what the future holds. It is nice to read such a diversity of information in the magazine, much more than just the typical "pinball and video stuff." Excellent job!

William Eade

Kevin,

I just re-subscribed to your magazine for 2-years. Your first year has been amazing. The articles, the info, the pics, the quality of the paper and print make them keepers. I can't throw them away.

Keep up the great work and I look forward to more Gameroom Magazine in the years to come.

Ray Francel

To Whom It May Concern:

I renewed my subscription on March 8. I have not received the April issue yet... should it have arrived by now? Thanks for the help, and keep up the great work.

Hint - more 80's video games, maybe some tech articles - vector vs. raster - basic power supply operation - rebuild fluorescent light assembly (is it the ballast or the starter that died?) - how to apply side art (decal and stencil) - basic joystick maintenance (lube movement and adjust leaf switches) - wiring 101.

Daniel Mosmeyer
The Vintage Geek

Daniel, just as I'm always looking out for great vintage coin-op articles, I want great video arcade articles as well. From restoration articles, to how-to tutorials, I want it all. (If any of our readers out there have a cool "back from the grave" restoration story, or a unique one-of-a-kind video game they'd like to show off, please email me at info@gameroommagazine.com! Also, this is a good opportunity for me to comment on the monthly mailings. Each issue is produced about a month in advance, with the printer mailing out the next month's issue on roughly the 18-19th of each month. US periodical class typically takes between 10-21 days to arrive—sometimes sooner, sometimes later (sometimes a lot later, unfortunately!). Because of the wide variance in delivery times, we typically don't send out replacement issues until after the 20th of the month. If you don't have your copy by then, it probably got lost in the mail system.

Hi guys,

Back on 07/17/06 I wrote in about arcades I'd seen in Dubai. Well our 18 month holiday is coming to an end but I thought I'd email a few other images from Central and South America.

One is an arcade I saw around midnight in the very seedy bus terminal in Belize City, Belize. I risked showing off (and having stolen!) my camera to snap this quick photo, before getting a taxi out of there. Got to love their security hey?

The other is a little arcade, mainly full of fighting games like street fighter, that was in the market at Antigua, Guatemala. Interesting to see arcades around the place.

And finally it's not an arcade machine but heaps of Foosball tables in a plaza in Peru. I took this on the Peru side of the Peru / Bolivia border. They seem to love playing foosball in Peru, with tables just setup in the street. Oh yeah you could also hire the toy cars in the background for your kids to play on.

Anyway keep up the good work.

Cheers, Rick

www.travelpod.com/members/eatdesertfirst

Rick, first off, wow! I just can't imagine how exciting it was to take 18 months and travel the world. It had to have been the experience of a lifetime. I laughed when I saw your web address is "eatdessert-first" — that's a great attitude for life, and you certainly seem to be living it to the fullest.

Thank you for the photos of the arcades you encountered during your travels. If any other GameRoom readers have some photographs of "arcades around the world," please send them in—I know I'd love to see them, and I'm sure other readers would as well!



A Belize City "Arcade"



An arcade in Antigua, Guatemala



Foosball tables in Peru

Questions? Comments? Rants? Raves?

GameRoom Magazine
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info@gameroommagazine.com

GameRoom News

Compiled by
Mitch Gerson



I Really Miss Pinball

While I know that you're reading this in May, I sit here in March at my computer still thinking about my recent trip to Las Vegas. I had the pleasure of visiting the amazing Pinball Museum there, in addition to some hotel arcades, including the one at the Luxor (which is one of the best Vegas arcades in my opinion) and Sega GameWorks on the strip. I had a go at one of the greatest arcade games I've played in a very long time there, the new "Afterburner Climax." If you have a chance to check one of those monsters out you have to—it brings back the thrill of the "old days" for sure.

I think that my visit to the pinball museum though has fueled my desire for a pin more than ever... hmm... I wonder if I got rid of my sofa? Think my wife would notice? Throw pillows—yeah, lots of throw pillows. Anyway, enjoy the news—there's a lot this month, so dive in.

INSERT COIN TO CONTINUE, Mitch

Ave Q for the Videogame set

This just in from Rob Welkner over at Coin Op.TV. "Videogame Theater" has started producing a series of twisted puppetry skits (ala the hit Broadway show Ave Q here in NYC), featuring our favorite videogame characters of the past.



As per Rob: "Videogame Theater had a special screening in Los Angeles at The Knitting Factory and the COIN-OP TV team was there to check out this collection of wacky and surreal dramatizations of our favorite classic video

game characters. Videogame Theater comes from Frank Meyer and Scott Chernoff who make shorts with puppets of Pac-Man, Mario, Donkey Kong, Frogger and Q*bert among others. The twist here is that these renditions are not the happy-go-lucky characters we've come to know over the years but quite the opposite. Pac-Man is a pill poppin narcissist while Mario and Donkey go to extremes to vie for the love of Pauline. These episodes are syndicated on MTV in Europe and floating around the net and are worth taking a peek."

Check 'em out for yourself here—WARNING: THESE ARE NOT FOR CHILDREN OR THOSE THAT ARE SENSITIVE TO EXTREME SITUATIONS. www.videogametheater.com/

Popeye On Your Cell Phone

I don't know why, but I've always liked the classic arcade game Popeye by Nintendo. It's not a particularly great game, but I've always enjoyed it nonetheless.



Namco has just announced that it's now available for play on your cell phone in all of its original 80's looking glory. Personally, I find cell phone gaming a real challenge, but it does look cool and it's fun when I have a few minutes to kill.

As per their press release--

"Well, Blow Me Down! Popeye Comes To Mobile Phones"—Namco Networks to deliver King Features' classic arcade game through mobile phones"

"...since his first appearance in comic strips in 1929, Popeye has been one of the most iconic

characters of the 20th century....capturing the spirit of the classic '80s arcade hit, the game lets players be Popeye on his perennial quest to win back his sweetie while overcoming the antics of his rival Pluto. Collect the hearts, musical notes and cries of "H-E-L-P" that a captured Olive tosses down, while avoiding the Sea Hag's bouncing skulls, Pluto's punches and other dangers. True to the series, Popeye is "strong to the finich" if he gets his spinach, temporarily gaining the strength to go after Pluto and knock him off the screen.

Unlike other versions of the game, the mobile edition will include bonus features, like networked components and an enhanced mode with additional game play, and cameos by other characters from the Popeye series."

To check out the flash animated version of the game to see if you want to buy it, check out their website here: namconetworks.com

Insert Coin...Buttons?

Once again, Randy Turner over at groovy-gamegear.com has found a beautiful solution to a very simple problem. For those of you out there that have skipped on adding a real coin door to their home built Mame™ cabinet or bartop and just used a regular arcade button for "credits"; this new product may be just what you've been looking for.



Designed to be put into the space of a regular arcade button, Randy has created an LED-lit button to be used on your machine to simulate an actual coin door drop button. A simple press of the button will add a credit

and the design is typically elegant plug/play as you'll find most of Randy's products are.

He's created a few variations of the "Insert Coin" for you to choose from such as "Press for Credit", "Press for Token" etc to meet your needs. The price is \$8.95 each and you can order them over here:

www.groovygamegear.com

A Pinball Video Channel (Not really, but close!)



Wow! Kevin pointed out to me this amazing source of great videos over at youtube.com posted by "Captain Pinball". There's a plethora of videos that were originally used as promotional tools to sell the latest and greatest machines by various manufacturers back in the heyday of the pinball industry.

The videos each run about 5 minutes and are well produced showing off each of the machines in loving detail. Some of the machines featured are *Monster Bash*, *Terminator*, *Theater of Magic* and more.

There are other pinball related videos as well from other manufactures and general pinball videos that are all highly entertaining and I'm sure you're going to enjoy it all.

One of my favorites was a promo for the Star Trek the Next Generation pin (surprised I'm a sci-fi geek too? Yeah, no shock there!)

Get the popcorn, and check 'em all out here: www.youtube.com/profile_videos?user=CaptainPinball

Can't Get Enough Pinball News?

Another item from the Boss's desk is a listing of not just one but two new websites devoted to producing weekly pinball related web casts. These sites feature fun and interesting programs that are free to download and listen to on your PC, iPod or MP3 gadget of choice. Here's the list:



Talk Pinball

<http://www.talkpinball.com/index.php>

"Talk Pinball is a web cast (online radio show) where enthusiasts can call in and talk to game designers, manufacturers, collectors, and more. We also share repair and restoration tips as well as answer tech questions."



TOPCast Pinball Talk

<http://www.marvin3m.com/topcast/>

"(We're a) one hour Internet radio show that allows people to call in (or email) and ask tech questions about their (broken) games. (We) also have Special Guests on the show that work in the pinball industry. The show is hosted by Norm & Shaggy of 'This Old Pinball' video DVD pinball repair and restoration fame."

Video Game...Shoes?

KOTAKU.com reports on these crazy shoes apparently that just re surfaced that were created in 2001 for Nintendo's GameBoy™ ad campaign. The pairs sold for \$2000 each and were made to order for those that just had to have them... uh, yeah.



As per the website—"Back in 2001, before Kotaku even existed and Nintendo was feeling zany, these three pairs of \$2,000 shoes were designed by a custom orthopedic shoe creator for the game maker's 2001 Style Campaign. Nintendo described them as geared for "club kids with attention deficit disorder." Not sure which is worse: The shoes, the price tag or the description.

Read more here:

<http://kotaku.com/gaming/shoes/retro-game-boy-platform-shoes-243311.php>

Bowling is Back, Baby!

This looks like a great arcade set up that someday may be a nice addition to my home game room. LAI Games just announced this sweet looking 11-foot lane bowling game for arcades with an optional 4 foot extension for a full 15 foot long lane!



As per the press release: "Super Strike features a motorized pin lifter and a 30 inch LCD scoring monitor that is positioned 8 feet above the lane and displays sharp animated graphics. Operator selectable settings allows for five or ten frame games, which can be played by up to four players on a single lane."

Oh I can't wait to buy a house and put one of these in the basement, instant bowling alley. Sweet! Check out more photos and details here: www.laigames.com/index.htm

Happ Makes Major Changes To Website

Thank goodness for Happ Controls. Without them, you may not be able to find the parts that you need for either repairing your machines or building fun little projects with many of their unique products. They are not the least expensive place to purchase parts, but their customer service is top notch and their shipping is fast.

The only thing that always bothered me was the fact that their website was really outdated with many line drawings/illustrations of their products rather than actual photos.

Well, I'm happy to report that they have fully re-launched their site with massive changes including full color high-resolution photos of their products, making purchasing decisions much easier.

Check out the new site here:
www.happ.com/

More Family Guy Pin Coverage

I know that we just ran a 2 part article on the genesis of the Family Guy pinball, but with only one or two pinball machines a year from the last factory in the world I thought that it warranted some more coverage that was insightful and interesting.



Pinballnews.com ran a few articles on the machine design with a ton of interesting

photos (not shown here in the GameRoom articles) that I have a feeling you'll enjoy. There's a full write up on how to play the machine in addition to a ton of MP3 audio clips from the game itself in case you haven't yet had the chance to check out the machine in person.



I played it at the Pinball Hall of Fame, and it's definitely going on my list for a future game room purchase (a guy can dream can't he?).

Read all about it here:
www.pinballnews.com/games/familyguy/index6.html

VGXPO, Major Changes

One of the first arcade conventions that I ever went to was the VGXPO (back when it was called PhillyExpo) and it was GREAT.

The following year (2005) they changed the format and it wasn't so great due to its very odd affiliation with MSNBC'S "Home Expo" that year. The crowd looked equally as confused as most of them were there for the

Home Expo, not a video game convention.

Last year, things were much better... but THIS year they promise an all-new format that sounds promising. I found a great write up over at next-gen.biz about it, and here's a very brief excerpt- *"The third annual America's VideoGame Expo (VGXPO) is doubling its size in Philadelphia with an expected 20,000 attendees. This year, VGXPO will be taking up residence at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, where the event will sprawl across 100,000 square feet of space."*

"VGXPO 2006 attracted companies including NVIDIA, Atari, Comcast, Microsoft, Nyko, Tips and Tricks magazine, Game Crazy, 1UP Network, Game Developers Conference, Nubi/Pelican and Nintendo. Over 50 companies attended last year, and Fleming expects that number to grow significantly this time around."

"VGXPO also plans to play host to recognizable keynote speakers this year. Although a speaker isn't finalized quite yet, last year, Microsoft game development general manager talked to attendees about XNA development."

For the full article, look up the article at:
http://www.next-gen.biz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4982&Itemid=2

Got a Hot News Tip?

We're always looking for exciting game room news and we need your help!

New coin-op, gameroom, and retrogaming product releases, industry announcements, coming events, updates on stories we're tracking—they're all fair game for inclusion in the pages of GameRoom News. If you've got something you feel is news-worthy, please send it in!

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Spring Shows 2007

Atlantique

March 24th and 25th marked yet another Spring installment of the famous Atlantique City Antique Show. This twice-annual show has been going strong for nearly 30 years and is one of the biggest indoor shows in the country.

On the prowl for game room collectibles, my wife and I had no trouble eyeing some great pieces. On the top of my list was a personal favorite, and one I haven't seen too often; an original (but repainted) Planter's Peanut Scale. According to the dealer, this was the very one that was set up only a mile away on the Atlantic City boardwalk for many decades. I wished it was cheaper, as the asking price of \$16,000 was past my budget. We also spotted many other pieces of coin op ranging from an early restored Seeburg Jukebox (\$3500), to a Williams Star Series Baseball Pinball (\$2300) to a nice Daval Gumball Stimulator on a base (\$800). Connecticut Dealer Bob Adams had over dozen great machines including a Shoot the Bear and a Rockola Jigsaw, just to name few. He even forced me (note the word "forced") to put on Clint Eastwood's gold jacket and hat used in the Las Vegas scene of the movie Pink Cadillac. Several other coin op dealers were also present including Bob Levy, Bob Kretcho, and Bill Howard; all who displayed many quality pieces, one of which was a rare Nobby Salted Peanut Vendor.

Amongst the many dealers who had some type of gumball, slot machine, or trade stimulator, were literally hundreds of dealers who had all sorts of advertising. I have generally found prices to be a bit higher at this show, but quantity and quality are two things always in abundance. If you are looking to finish off your gameroom or bar area with appropriate signage, you could find enough items at this show to probably mortgage your house several times over. Again, I won't say there were any steals (these are all seasoned dealers), but if you are looking for something high end, this is a great place to visit.

Atlantique is held twice annually, once in March, and the second show in October. For more information on this fabulous indoor show, go to www.atlantiquecity.com

—Kenneth Schnoll



Chicagoland

The spring 2007 Chicagoland Antique Advertising, Slot Machine, and Jukebox show was held March 30–April 1st in the Pheasant Run resort just outside Chicago.

This was my first visit to Chicagoland, and I've got to say I was impressed with the sheer scope of vendors and their offerings. If you wanted something for your game room, from the antique to the modern, odds are you could find it at this show.

In fact, the entire show was a mix of old and new. For example, Brad Frank presented a new, unique reproduction of Chicago Coin's "Band in a Box," a cute collection of animated "big band" figures that move in time to your favorite music source. There were also classic woodrail pinball machines for sale right alongside the modern "Ultra-pin" video pinball system.

I saw a number of great buys, and about the only thing that saved me from a buying spree was the fact that my minivan was packed with my booth display! If I had just been an attendee instead of a vendor, I would have come home with something cool.

Like the Atlantique show, the Chicagoland show is held twice annually. If you live near the Chicago area, you owe it to yourself to check out the show! — Kevin Steele



ASI

If you want to see the latest and greatest in coin-op amusement games there isn't a better place in the United States than the AAMA's Amusement Showcase International (ASI) trade show. This year the show returned to Vegas and with that also expanded from 134 exhibitors to 152 spanning all facets of coin-op amusement: from plush toys and animatronics, to marketing and consulting companies, and of course... lots and lots of awesome games!

The general atmosphere continues to be one of cautious optimism with several new games unveiled this year and Family Entertainment Center (FEC) and route operators looking for the next big thing.

SEGA

The word SEGA is almost synonymous with arcade games, so it should be no surprise that some of the greatest video games were to be found in their booth.

Of course I am still overwhelmed by how awesome the entire SEGA line is, from the



amazing Afterburner Climax to the extremely fun and quirky *Let's Go Jungle*. But nothing prepared me for the excitement I felt when I stepped up to play their latest gun game, *Too Spicy*.

Imagine a standard lightgun game and then add the ability to move yourself along a path by using a right and left peddle ... then throw it into multiplayer mode and hunt down your opponent in a destructible environment.

NAMCO

NAMCO also continued to impress with more updates to the extremely cool *Bowl-a-Rama*. The game now features various tournament functions and a "Trick Shots" mode where the game places only a couple pins and you have to knock them all down with one strike <or shot?>.

Global VR

At AMOA last fall Global VR unveiled their *Aliens* gun game and now they are following that up with another based on the extremely popular *Far Cry* franchise from Ubisoft. Gameplay is similar to classics like *Jurassic Park* and the more recent *Let's Go Jungle* from SEGA.

On the other side of the spectrum was a new game they unveiled at the show called *Puck Off*. Obviously not intended for kids, this simple but fun video shuffleboard game showed promise but definitely needs tweaks to make it as fun and exciting as the real shuffleboard.

Incredible Technologies

While Incredible Technologies wasn't actually an exhibitor at the show they did have a small presence in a distributor's booth, where I found their latest game, *Bags*. As you can guess from the title, this is a beanbag toss game and I was skeptical at first, but from watching people play it seems like they may have a winner. The machine always had people crowded around it so I wasn't able to try it myself. I look forward to spending more time with this game soon though.

Andamiro

Those of you who read the December 2006 issue of GameRoom may remember my first foray into the dancing game world at Pin Expo ... well somehow I got suckered into playing Andamiro's *Pump It Up* and I had a blast – so did the developers and play testers who probably got a good chuckle from watching me.

—James Hills



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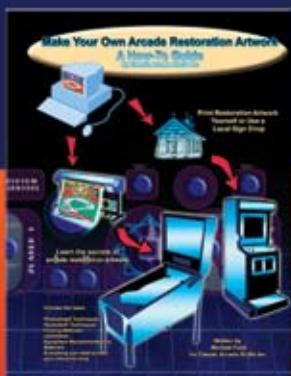


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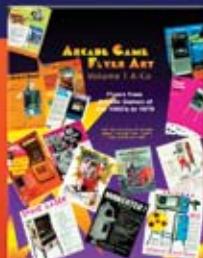


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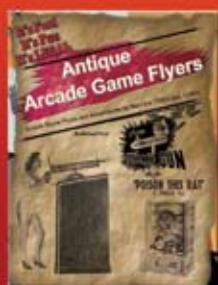
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One Man's Adventures in Constructing His Own Completely Unique, Made from Scratch Pinball Machine

by Jeff Mathews



A few years ago we moved from Boston, Massachusetts to Lyons, Colorado. Lyons is a small mountain town which sits only an hour from the Continental Divide's Trail Ridge Road. This road crosses the heart of the Rocky Mountain National Forest and at over 12,000 feet it's the highest continuous paved highway in the United States. Our town is understandably known as *The Gateway to the Rockies*, but probably lesser recognized for holding one of the highest pinball per capita ratios in the Nation. With about 150 pinball machines and only 1,600 residents, the town currently boasts of nearly one machine for every 10 people.

Thankfully, a good portion of the town's pins are in public service. I'm speaking of course about the meticulously maintained machines at Kevin and Carole's *Lyons Classic Pinball* arcade. Visitors come from all over to play these museum quality machines at very reasonable prices. Having grown up to Pac-Man pattern gaming, I don't recall playing much pinball when I was a kid. But after a few visits to this arcade and some quality talks with Kevin I now consider myself a fledgling PinHead. I was indoctrinated on machines like Gottlieb Haunted House and 300. I found there is an analog, magical, ethereal romance in the lights, sounds, wood, and metal of these machines.

It wasn't much longer before there were machines at home — then in a new game room at work. I soon had the pick of seven free play machines. This meant it was time for a real challenge. I'm an embedded systems engineer by day. I design the control software and electronics for the systems that run

everyday things: automotive engine management, cell phones, wireless access points, and even fancy coffee machines. With a woodworking hobby and the help of many friends and family, I was sure I could... construct my own pinball machine from scratch!



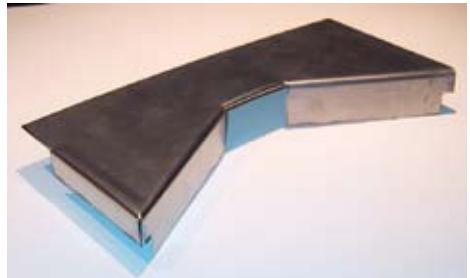
In the Winter of '05, I conceived the idea of building a 3/4-scale pinball machine after being disappointed with plastic pinball toys for my kids. It would be a multidisciplinary effort wrought with difficulty and expense but worth the effort. The primary goal of my project was to make a true, complete, and locationable pinball from scratch. I wanted to make it clear that it was created from the ground up and this fit well with the scheme to fabricate it to 3/4-scale for the kids. Its

size gave birth to the name for this scale — I called it the TweenPin series.

I've found that there are people interested in the construction of their own custom machines, but most have had only the opportunity to change the artwork on an older machine. Artwork is core to creating theme and really completes a game, but to me the real interest is in the control system. Having the ability to build a custom control system, means being able to control any number of toys, playfield arrangements, or rule sets.

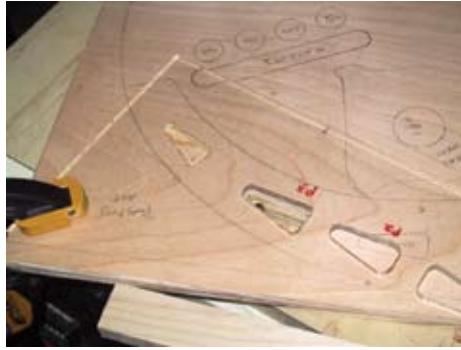
From the start I wanted only new components for this machine. Sourcing electrical and electronic components was not at all difficult. For example, the cabinet's main power supply and control board is constructed from all new components. However, pinball specific assemblies were another matter. I spent quite a bit of time talking to just about every parts supplier I could. Eventually I learned what parts could and couldn't be designed into a one-off game. For example, sourcing new and complete drop target assemblies would be pretty much impossible. What was unusual and difficult about my approach from my parts supplier's point of view was that I was not shopping for replacement parts on a specific machine. Instead, I was shopping for complete assemblies based on their function and appearance. It reminds me a bit of going to the parts counter at your local auto dealership and asking to dig around in the back, just to look for parts that seem interesting, without knowing your car's model or make.

The arrival of the pinball assemblies inspired a quick sawing out of the cabinet



and playfield. After which I turned to routing the playfield. I fabricated acrylic templates for the playfield inserts and hand routed the playfield with a fluted bit. Using two different template guides and depths I achieved an acceptable shelf at each insert location. After some fine tuning, the inserts went in easily and still didn't allow light around their edges.

The actual name of this particular finished machine is "Cabin Fever." The artwork depicts a cabin in the woods, a bear, and so forth. The bear head is the primary attraction and the only toy in the machine. If not for the head, the cabinet would have been designed like a 70s pin, where the glass is parallel with the playfield. The head opens and closes with the assistance of the control board and a hobby servo. Inside the painted playfield mouth is a traditional Gottlieb style capture hole mechanism. After knocking out all of the "BEAR" targets, the bear head opens, the mouth is lit, and the arrow target flashes indicating the bear bonus is available. When the ball is captured in the mouth, the bear "chews" the ball a while, and then it spits it back out. Knocking down the "LOG-JAM" targets increases the bonus multiplier. This is where the real points are. And just for fun, when the multiplier exceeds the limit, the machine goes into Crazy Mode where the sounds change and the flipper buttons reverse. This mode was inspired by the flexibility of our control system and my desire to keep games shorter during shows; however,



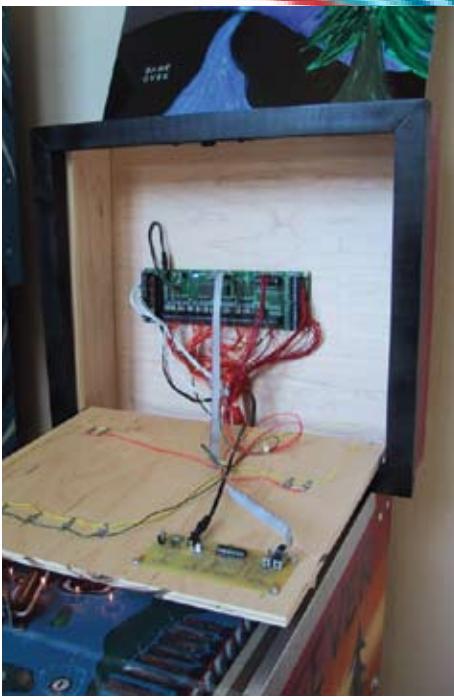
I hear there is something similar in the 2003 Simpsons pin.

I decided to fabricate all my plastics from 3/32" polycarbonate (generic Lexan). This material is usually reserved for protection washers. Constructing templates was a matter of templating with cardstock, routing, sanding, polishing, and painting. The plastics around the bear head are a single piece, a fairly complex plastic that doubles as target cover, bear arms, and strike protection for the assemblies inside the head's mouth.

I fabricated the metal parts that were highly custom. The odd size of the machine meant a good deal of extra work. The machine is only 30" tall from floor to lockbar and the playfield is only 18 x 33". This meant I needed one-off legs, rails, lockdown, spinner and guide lanes. Thankfully my father, a mechanical design engineer turned marketing executive, had some time to figure out these components and had access to a full machine shop.

For this machine, I refused design changes that I felt would lessen the romance of a pinball machine. It would be steel, wood and glass, not plastic, and it would have incandescent bulbs, not LEDs. However, I did make a few modern optimizations. I feel they are appropriate given the year of construction and furthermore, I like to think I carefully honored the historical progression of pinball into these choices. For example, I wired the flippers only on their high current lugs. The control board itself uses a timer to switch that single coil winding from a full "hit" to a pulsed "hold" current. An end-of-





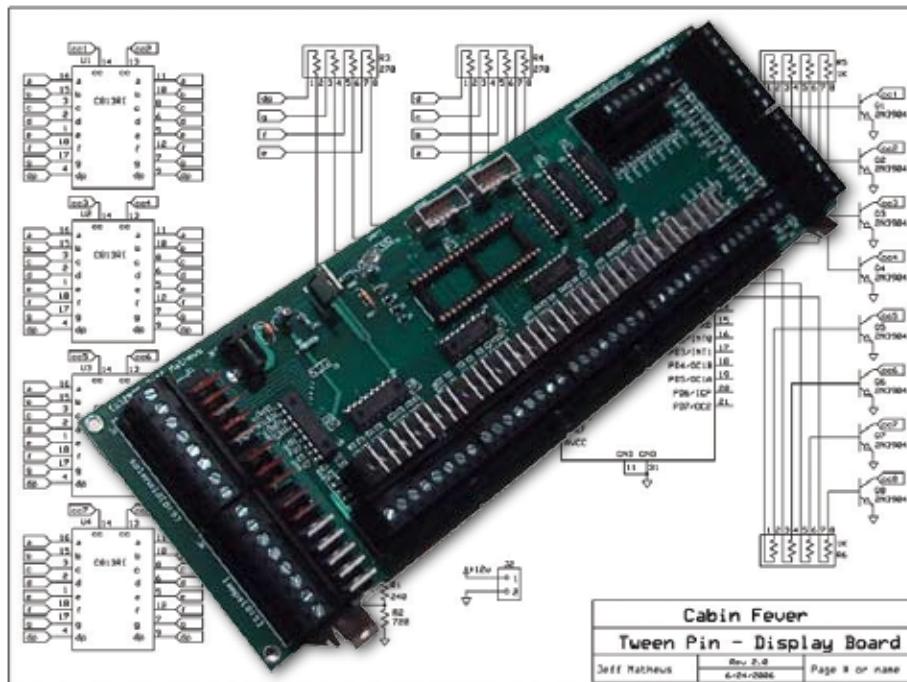
stroke switch is not needed.

The backbox exterior is much like that of an early '80s Gottlieb machine, but to avoid the complexities of the traditional hinging and latching mechanisms, I instead opted for a '90's style backbox lock. The backglass slides out through a slot in the top allowing the backbox panel to swing down on hinges revealing the control system.

The machine's heart is a modern, lead free, control board and software system, designed and built here in Lyons, Colorado. I feel that a pinball machine is a perfect example of a real-time control system. As such, it should function with a dedicated embedded control

system. The good news was that since I was designing and constructing my own control system, I was free to do whatever I could imagine. I was completely free to design the playfield in any fashion I desired. I could integrate whatever electromechanical assemblies I could find and I could control the rules, the solenoids, and the whole system. It was here that my creativity could run amok and I could do whatever I wanted.

What are traditionally separate boards requiring nearly two square feet of area, I combined into a single custom circuit board with over 80 external connections. The power regulation, rules, lighting, switches, pop bumper and flipper control are all handled through a single 12" x 4" control board and its speedy embedded software. There is no opportunity for those interested in the fine art of programming language and operating system debate, since the software is so simple. It is written in C, without either an operating



system or esoteric pinball language.

Contrary to the fixed assignments normally seen in your pinball machine schematics, we did not even bother with a formal assignment of solenoids, lamps, and switches. When we first powered up the machine, the game was playing absolutely crazy. The target switches would directly activate the knocker and flipper buttons were controlling pop bumpers! With the unlimited adjustability of our custom control system only a few simple software changes were needed to quickly resolve these oddities. The system also easily accommodates a myriad of coils and electromechanical assemblies from various suppliers.

There are a few changes we'll be making for my future machines. Cabinet construction was surprisingly straight forward, but a move to a high quality European Baltic birch plywood seems to be in order. The 3/4-scale of this particular machine meant I couldn't utilize many standard parts from other pins. For future machines, I'm seriously considering more complex displays and sound. It would also be interesting to integrate some electromagnets and more unique and complex toys.

We've already started on our next machine, full size and full of fantastic ideas. Thanks to our first efforts and the '06 Pinball Expo, we've made some great contacts. We're now consulting with several current and former industry players. We'll be play testing our first whitewood at the local arcade which is chock full of serious players. We expect to wind up with about a dozen of these very fun, unique games. **GR**

Special Thanks

Luckily this project was either magnetic or crazy enough to have drawn in the help of my family and many friends. Special thanks to our kids, Molly and Snow (Tween inspiration), my perfect wife Amy (art and support), my mother Anita (support), my father Mark (mechanical design and metal fabrication), Bob Kornoff (woodworking tools), Lee Taylor (partner & awesome code monkey), Randy Willig (electronics consultation), Tom Karpeichik (woodworking consultation), Pete Moffitt (welding and metal fabrication), local artists Jeani Spahr (hand painted playfield) and Craig Knaak (back-glass and plastics).

diy pinball



DIY Pinball hosted a seminar on the construction of custom machines at the 2006 Chicago Pinball Expo. If you missed DIY Pinball there, you can catch them at the Rocky Mountain Pinball Showdown in April of 2007. Jeff and Lee Taylor are planning on introducing custom pinball machines for the avid collector and kits for the do it yourself pinhead. If you're interested in building your own pin or contributing to the designs of their next machines, they are looking for your input. Please drop a line with your suggestions, ideas, and requests to jeff@diypinball.com.

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Restoring the Bally Lido

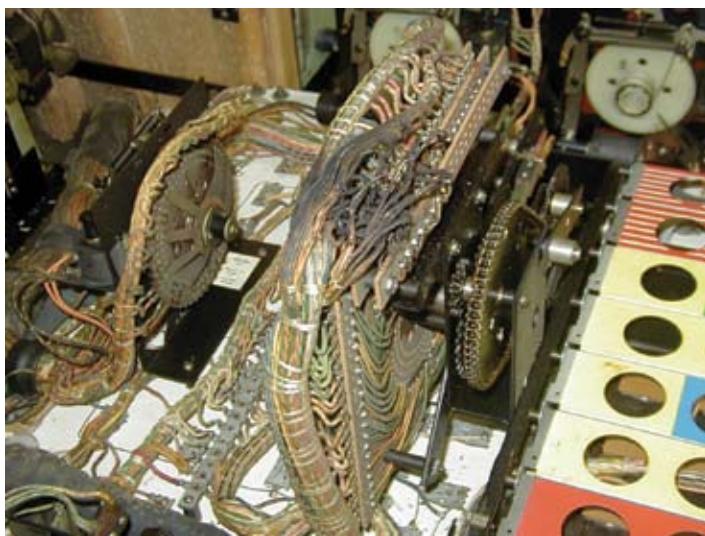
Bringing a bingo pinball back from the dead by Jeffery Lawton

So, you want to work on pinball? How about a pinball that is terminally ill? Such was the case with the Lido I had accepted as payment for some service work I had done. This game had extensive (with a capital "E") fire damage. The top corner of the Search Disc was burnt including over 60% of the wires connected to it. The wiring above the Search Disc on the Magic Screen unit was also 30% burnt up. The Search Lock Latch Coil (the source of the fire) was "toast, burnt toast".



Burnt Search Disc

But, that's not all, the fire had also damaged the Mixer #2 Coil and the Yellow Score Unit. Both were destroyed (and these are on the back door, nowhere near the actual fire source).

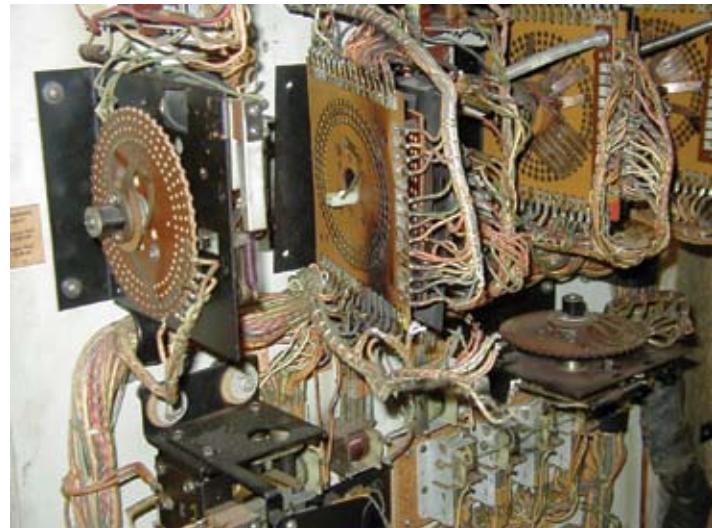


Burnt Magic Screen Unit Wiring

Now, why does this happen, you ask? You guessed it; the game had quit in mid-register cycle and left voltage on the Search Latch Coil too long, causing it to catch fire due to excessive heat.



Burnt Search Latch Coil



Burnt Yellow Score Unit

"But wait a minute", you say, "The game isn't supposed to stop when it is paying replays; is it?"

Of course the game isn't supposed to stop in the middle of paying replays, but every Bally magic screen game from Sea Island to Malibu Beach MAY STOP due to a design flaw. But, more on that later in the story.

To make matters worse, I guess a previous owner had relegated this game to "parts status". Someone (who obviously understood the futility of trying to repair this game) had decided to remove parts. There was no Trip Bank Reset Coil and there was no Free Play Set Plate; both had been removed.

Once I decided to attack this beast, I started with the Magic Screen unit. My thinking was that I only had to deal with "wires," not a ruined board as well. That idea turned out to be false because the wiring "inside" the Magic Screen Unit had burnt too. This meant I had to take the three piece wiring harness apart on the Magic Screen and

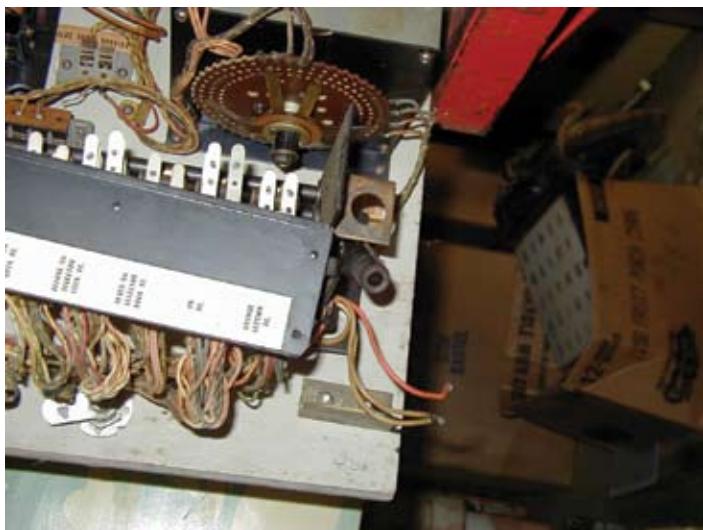
carefully replace or repair all the burnt inside wires. Only then could I be sure of getting good continuity when repairing the “outside” wires.

I copied portions of the manual that showed the wiring of both the Magic Screen Unit and the Search Disc because I needed to be sure of the exact wire locations of the burnt wires. I couldn’t depend on insulation color because the insulation was gone. I discovered that many of the damaged wires on the Magic Screen Unit were also damaged on the Search Disc. This made assuring continuity of each wire extra difficult because of the obvious short circuits caused by missing, burnt up insulation.



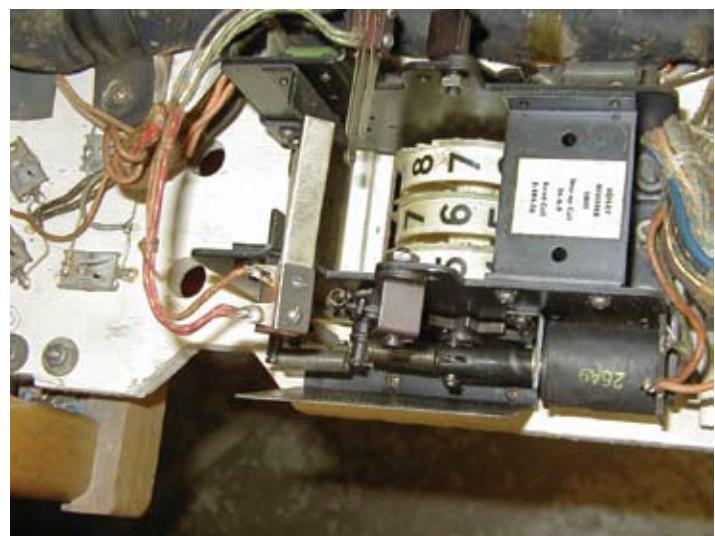
The Burnt Mixer #2 Coil

To tackle the rewiring, I had to cut the cable ties so I could access the undamaged wire. Then I either spliced in new wire or reinsulated the existing wire with shrink wrap. I was surprised how resilient the burnt wires were. Even though the insulation was completely burnt off many of the wires were still good and solid.



Gap where the Trip Bank Coil should have been

Continuity testing was another story. Often I had to unsolder the wire from both ends to be sure I was really checking the wire I thought I was checking. And, I had to test each wire, one at a time. If I didn’t, well, you know what happens when you rush this kind of job. Yup, if you haven’t got time to do it right, you’d better have time to do it over.



Free Play Unit, missing the plate. Without this plate the game cannot play from free plays



Completed Magic Screen Unit wiring

Next order of business, the Search Disc. As I said earlier, I had to replace the entire Search Disc and I decided to replace the rotating Search Wiper as well. I removed all the switch stack parts, unsoldered the 18 Hz. control motor and removed the Spring Tension Screw from the control motor shaft. This allowed me to remove the entire motor and shaft as a single unit. With the switches and shaft out of the way I could concentrate on the Search Disc wiring.

I removed the old Search Disc screws but didn’t extract the old disc completely because I knew I had to do the wires one at a time. I took this opportunity to change out the Search Latch Coil since the area around it was completely open and accessible.

With the old Search Disc unmounted, I placed the new Search Disc and Rotating Wiper in position then I wired the back side first, wire by wire. I started here because these wires were all “clean” and undamaged. They also are the most difficult to get to because of the tight quarters I had to work in.

Next I did the lower front side wires that were undamaged. This left me with half the front side and all three rows of the top side. You know, the burnt wires.

Actually, things were getting better. Because the old Search disc didn’t have any backside wires connected to it any more, I had more flexibility of movement.



Once I cleared the burnt Search Disc and other parts out of the way, I replaced the Search Latch Coil



The front wiring completed



Once I cleared the burnt Search Disc and other parts out of the way, I replaced the Search Latch Coil



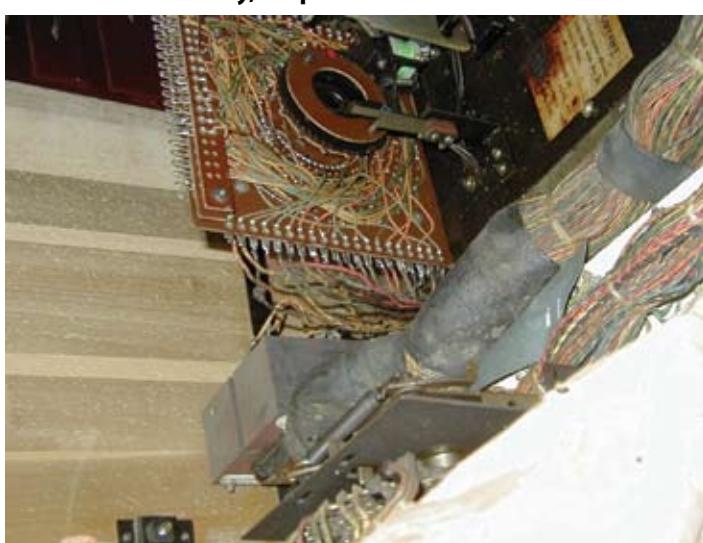
Finally, all the wiring completed

After about 5 weeks I finally finish the wiring for both the Magic Screen Unit and the new Search Disc. I clean all the switches for the control motor cams and I clean the control motor and shaft leathers too. After all, the stuff is already outside the game, might as well clean them up.

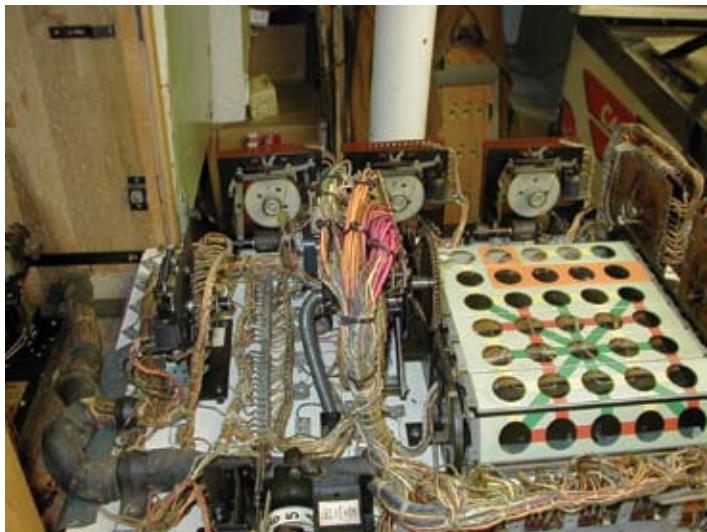
I put everything back together and plug the game in. Once I condition the beast to think there is a body attached to it, I start it up. Wow! The game starts, the Magic Screen resets when I simulate the shutter screen reset circuit; I can't believe it. I am even more excited when I simulate number combinations and the correct numbers light up based on what I simulated.

Now the acid test, I test various winners; both in-line and color section winners and EVERYTHING WORKS.

Well, almost everything works. You see I can't test any Yellow winners because I haven't wired in the new Yellow Score Unit yet.



Here you can see the inside wiring completed



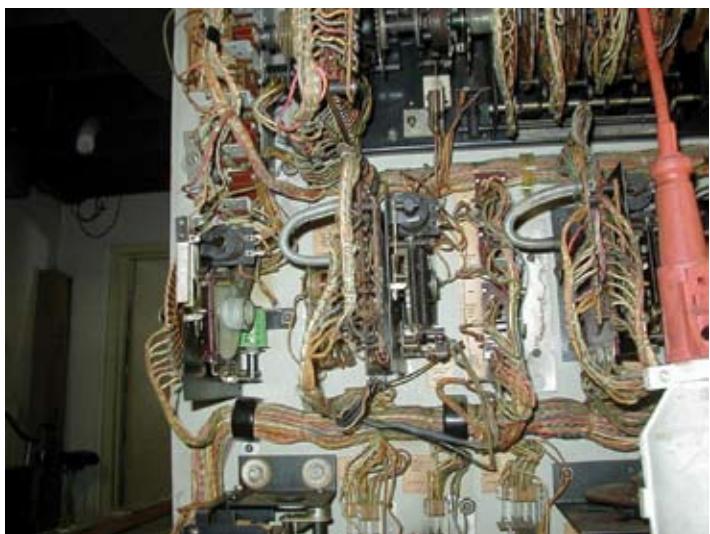
Magic Screen wiring all dressed down



The new Yellow Score Unit, wired in and dressed down



Search Disc wiring all dressed down



Now after 7 weeks of fun and frolic I am ready to put the fully rewired head onto the game body and really test it out.

Of course, some things don't work like they did when I simulated the body but that's to be expected. I finished cleaning the shutter motor and other cabinet switches and touched up the other units in the head that didn't need to be wired and the game came up and played. Yes, really, honest!

I also solved the original problem that caused the fire in the first place. The Magic Screen games from Sea Island don't tilt the game at the end of the timer cycle like the older games did. These newer Magic Screen machines just shut off the control motors at the end of the timer cycle. Plus, the timer cycle is only 8 steps. So at step 8, the motors shut off.

I wired an additional switch in the timer circuit. This switch is in series with the normal timer circuit and opens the feed every time the Rotating Search Wiper is not at index position. In other words, as soon as the search cycle starts the timer can not step until the search cycle ends. This single switch and about 3 feet of wire, if it had been added by the previous owner, would have saved this game from the massive destruction that almost sent it to the pinball graveyard. **GR**



Another patient successfully cured by the Doctor

The Ultimate MPU Board

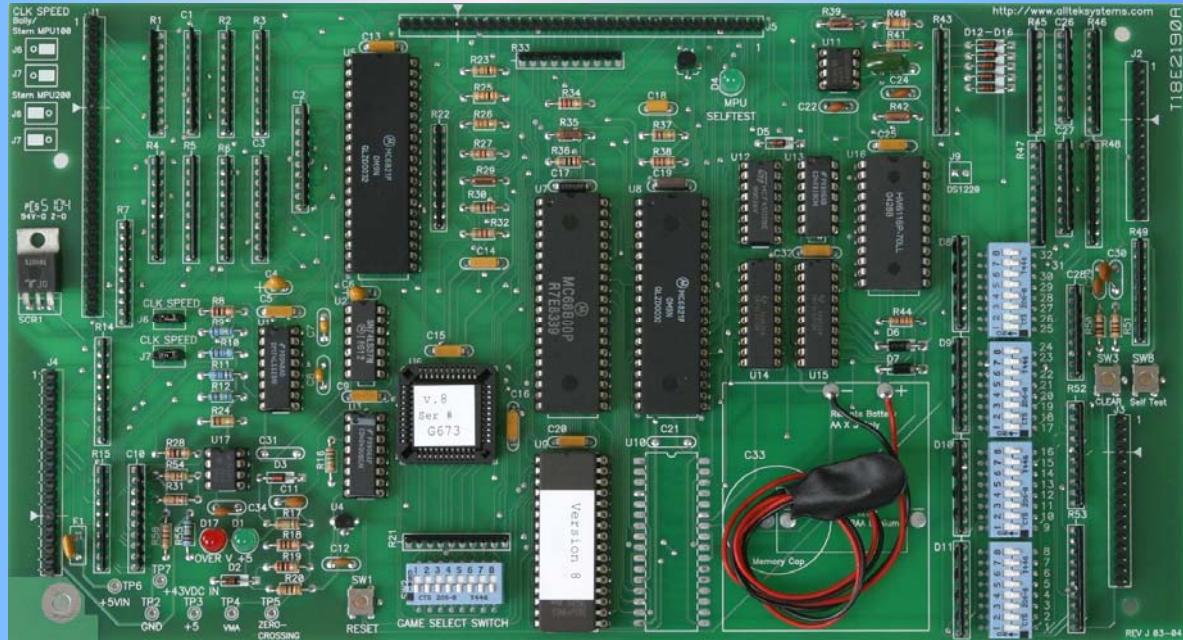
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Build Your Own Pinball Rotisserie



by Matt Davis

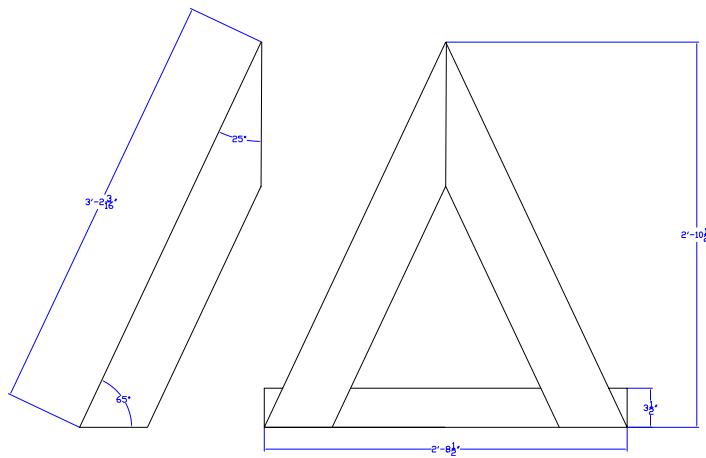
While watching "This Old Pinball – Volume 7 'Banzai Wars'" Shaggy uses (and does a little promotion of) a Pinball Playfield Rotisserie. (<http://www.abitofleisure.com/rotisserie.html>)

Basically, a pinball rotisserie is a pinball "workbench" where you can mount your pinball playfield and then rotate the playfield when needed. This allows you to easily work on both sides of the playfield (the top side and the underside), which is handy when doing repair work or "shopping out" your pinball.

In the video Shaggy points out that there are ways to build one yourself but they don't break down the way the commercial one does for easy storage.

After thinking about it and doing some searching I found that Ed Chueng (<http://www.edcheung.com/album/album05/pinball/playfield.htm>) had built something similar on a workbench to allow him easy access to his Space Shuttle playfield. Since my work area is a total mess and the only workbench I have is where I do all my soldering, etc., I decided I'd try to build a stand alone rotisserie that I could sit at that would break down for easy storage.

I own "regular" full size pinball machines and two Baby Pac-Man's, so it occurred to me that playfields may very well come in many shapes and sizes. I would want my rotisserie design to accommodate many sizes. Here's what I came up with:



The basic design would be 2 Large triangles attached at the base and have one other attachment for stability. I wanted it to raise the playfield to a level where I could sit at it.

To be honest, I just started cutting and didn't really have a plan. In hindsight it ended up something like this:



After assembling the triangle sides of the rotisserie I needed a way to make them moveable for different sized playfields. At the bottom points of the triangles I attached a flat piece of metal with 4 holes in it. I attached them to the bottom like so:

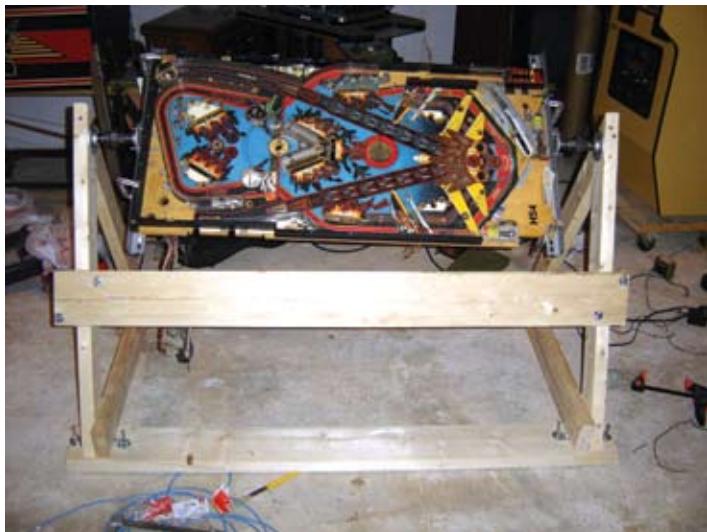




This allowed me to mount the triangles to a 2x6 that runs the length of the playfield via carriage bolts and wing nuts put in through the bottom of the 2x6:



On one side of the triangles about half way up I added some L brackets to add an additional 2x6 for support.



The thing that holds the playfield is a combination of plumbing parts and a long metal L that I found in the long strips of metal section at Lowes.

Each side requires:

2 "Floor Flanges"

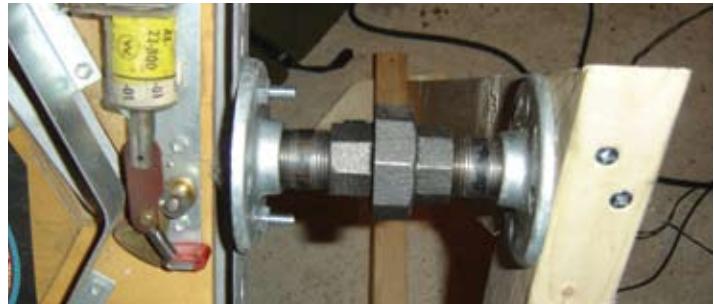
2 "Nipples"

1 Pipe Union

They go in this order:

Floor Flange – Nipple – Pipe Union – Nipple – Floor Flange

The completed assembly looks like this:



One end is mounted to the top of the triangle and the other simply holds what will be the "shelf" that holds the playfield.

Once everything is set up and tightened you can set the playfield on the "shelves". I used c-clamps to hold the Playfield tight to the shelves. Someone suggested that c-clamps would not be enough to hold a fully populated playfield, however using 4 (2 at each end) I can't imagine any playfield this thing couldn't hold. On the F-14 playfield I used for this example I pressed and shook on it until the playfield made noise (like cracking almost) and I decided it was good enough for me. I left room for my chair and legs. GR



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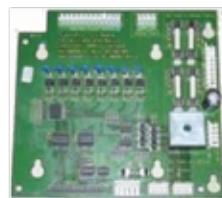
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Replacement for Fliptronic I+II
Board A-15028, A-15472.1

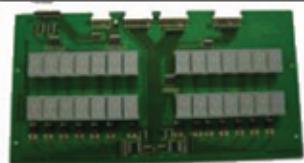


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The Many Incarnations of...

by Jonathan Imberi



The Many Incarnations of Mario

This month in “*The Many Incarnations of...*” we take a look at the evolution of one of the most popular gaming characters of all time, Mario. As always, Pac-Man is here to provide “color commentary,” and Professor Pac-Man is on hand with interesting trivia tidbits!

1983

Mario Bros.



From the Flyer: Nintendo presents Mario and Luigi in Mario Bros. with Shellcreeper, Fighterfly and Sidestepper. Pests come pouring out of the waterpipes. Mario and Luigi clean up the place! Grab all the coins for a perfect score. Hit POW switch and flip pests on all floor. Jump! Punch! Kick them off when they're down.

Inky, Blinky, Pinky and Clyde would be the least of my worries if the Mrs. and I had any of those nasties crawling out of our drains! It's a good thing Mario and Luigi are on the scene, as that's one chomp I'd rather not take! Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: This was the first game to feature Mario in a title role.

Now, hold up there a minute Prof! Everyone knows Mario debuted in Donkey Kong!

That's where you're wrong – well, at least you're only half right. The hero we all know and love from *Donkey Kong* was actually named Jump-

man. It wasn't until the game debuted in the US that the hero's name was changed to Mario. You see the character hadn't been developed completely and Nintendo wasn't prepared to name their character just yet. It was a very last minute decision. That's also why Mario is a carpenter in *Donkey Kong*, but a plumber in later games.

PAC-MAN: I knew there was a reason I was covering *The Many Incarnations of Donkey Kong* in the next column! You see, Professor, I'm really just too smart for my own good! Wocka! Wocka! Anyway you can continue now...

Thank you... *Mario Bros.* is also the game that introduced us to Mario's brother Luigi.

1984

Golf



From the NES Packaging: From tee to green, you've never played golf like this! Nintendo GOLF lets you choose your clubs, change your stance, control your swings – even select the angle of impact!

PAC-MAN: So I decided to play a round of golf... 244 balls later they threw me off the course—apparently they don't provide complimentary golf balls for your snacking pleasure! So I've been known to throw back a pellet or 200 – it's not my fault! Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: This title was also released as a bonus collectible in *Doubutsu no Mori* for the Nintendo 64 and in *Animal Crossing* for the GameCube.

1985

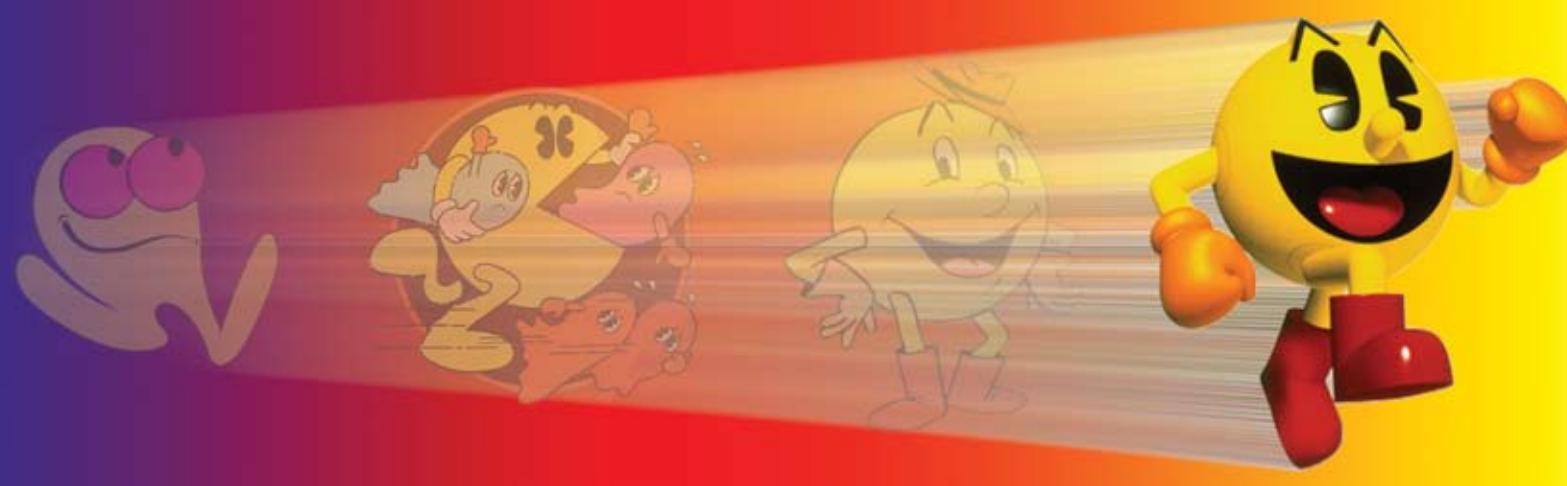
Vs. Wrecking Crew



From the NES Packaging: Here's an off-the-wall demolition game that you design yourself! The amazing Nintendo programmable game lets you design your own building, place obstacles wherever you want them, and then blow everything!

PAC-MAN: Personally, I think I should have been the star of this game as I have a knack for bringing the house down! Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: *Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix* contains a song called “Destruction Dance” which was derived from the music originally in *Wrecking Crew*.



1985

Super Mario Bros.



From the NES Packaging: Do you have what it takes to save the Mushroom Princess? You'll have to think fast and move even faster to complete this quest! The Mushroom Princess is being held captive by the evil Koopa tribe of turtles. It's up to you to rescue her from the clutches of the Koopa King before time runs out. But it won't be easy. To get to the Princess, you'll have to climb mountains, cross seas, avoid bottomless pits, fight off turtle soldiers and a host of black magic traps that only a Koopa King can devise. It's another non-stop adventure from the Super Mario Bros!

PAC-MAN There must be something about being SUPER and having to eat mushrooms. As Super Pac-Man I once had to eat an entire maze filled with mushrooms. Have I ever mentioned that I hate mushrooms? Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: Mario's trademark toothbrush mustache and red hat were the result of artists cutting corners. During the game's development, it was decided that giving him a hat and a mustache would be easier than drawing and animating hair and a mouth.

1988

Super Mario Bros. 2



From the NES Packaging: Mario's back! Bigger and badder than ever before! This time it's a fierce action-packed battle to free the land of Subcon from the curse of the evil Wart. It's up to you, along with Mario, Luigi, Toad and the Princess to fight your way through bizarre multi-level worlds and find him! This time you've got a brand new kind of power – plucking power – and now anything you find can be a weapon. But beware! You've never seen creatures like these! Shygus and Tweeters! Ningi and Beezos! And you've never had an adventure like this! Only cunning and speed can save you now...

PAC-MAN Hey Professor, any idea why they got away from the "run, jump, and stomp" play style of the original SMB and why the graphics and worlds in SMB2 look so different from what we saw in SMB?

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: Well Pac-Man, the US *Super Mario Bros. 2* was a conversion of the Nintendo title, *Dream Factory: Doki Doki Panic*. They simply replaced the characters in that game with characters from the well-known Mario universe. The levels still progress in a linear fashion, but for the first time Mario can backtrack.

PAC-MAN Yeah, now that you mention it I did notice the backtracking ability. I guess Mario's popularity was growing a little faster than Nintendo had foreseen! Wocka! Wocka!

1988

Super Mario Bros. 3



From the Flyer: New, different worlds! New, exciting levels! New challenges galore! Fight monsters and mini-bosses, avoid ghosts and the burning sun. Make your way through water and quicksand. Dodge cannonballs and bullets and rescue the King's wand! In Super Mario Bros. 3 there are more warps, more chances at extra lives, and new special suits! The raccoon suit lets you fly and knock out blocks. The frog suit helps you outswim deadly fish. There are suits for every occasion! Store up flowers and mushrooms to use later on. Play game-show type bonus rounds! Go back to that last screen and get a mushroom! Pause to take a break, then continue where you left off!

PAC-MAN Ghosts? Did I read something about ghosts? Now I know a thing or two about ghosts that might come in handy in this game! Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: *Super Mario Bros. 3* was first previewed in the arcades as a PlayChoice-10 title before being released on the Nintendo Entertainment System. The tune played when using one of the warp flutes, hidden throughout the game, is the exact melody used from the flute in *The Legend of Zelda*.

1990

Dr. Mario



From the NES Packaging: Dr. Mario – the prescription is fun. It's Dr. Mario for an intense new challenge! Mario throws multi-colored vitamin capsules into a bottle that contains an ugly variety of nasty viruses. You can move, shift or spin the capsules as they fall. Arrange them to align with other capsules on top of the virus. If you can get 4 or more of the same color in a row, POOF! They disappear! Destroy all the viruses in the bottle and you progress to the next round where things get even more difficult. Dr. Mario, with germs that are fun to catch.

PAC-MAN: Dr. Mario?? Who gave him a PhD? I wonder if this is how all doctors prescribe medication? Ooohhh that Purple Pill is kind of pretty!! I'll take a few of those, Dr. Mario! Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: Dr. Mario was the first non-action Mario game in which the Mario character was neither controllable nor playable. Some fans initially called the game 'Mario 4', as it was the first Mario game to be released after *Super Mario Bros. 3*.

1991

Mario's Open Golf



From the NES Packaging: How can sand traps and water be this much fun? Whether you're an aspiring amateur or a professional-class golfer, Mario's Open Golf puts you right in the thick of a world-class golf tournament. Select your club, check the wind and lay of the turf, and then drive your way toward winnings worth over one million dollars! Pick from three tough courses: one in the US, one in Japan, and one in the U.K. Practice your strokes, then compete against a friend. For

the ultimate challenge, tee off against 36 computerized golfers and compete for top ranking. It's all here in Mario's Open Golf! So warm up on 18 holes and move up to tournament play. The better the golfer, the bigger the prize. Give it your best shot and go for the big money!

PAC-MAN: Now that I understand the golf balls are to be hit and not eaten – I thought I would give it another try. I played a round with Mario and I scored a 236!! He only managed a 74, so I declared myself the winner! Mario informed me that the person with the lowest score wins. Go Figure!!! I think golf is a bit of a backwards game. Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: The Japanese release of this title had three additional courses and did not include a US course.

1991

Super Mario World



From the NES Packaging: Tackle a whole new world with Mario and Yoshi! Mario's off on his biggest adventure ever, and this time he's brought along a friend. Yoshi the dinosaur teams up with Mario to battle Bowser, who has kidnapped Princess Toadstool once again. Guide Mario and Yoshi through nine peril-filled worlds to the final showdown in Bowser's castle. Use Mario's new powers and Yoshi's voracious monster-gobbling appetite as you explore 96 levels filled with dangerous new monsters and traps. Climb mountains and cross rivers, and descend into subterranean depths. Destroy the seven Koopa castles and find keys to gain entrance to hidden levels. Discover more warps and thrilling bonus worlds than ever before! Mario's back, and this time he's better than ever!

PAC-MAN: Who does this Yoshi think he is?!? "Yoshi's voracious monster-gobbling appetite" – my little round yellow butt he's got a voracious monster-gobbling appetite. Has he never herd of PAC-MAN? I coined the phrase monster-gobbling and I'll take him on any day! Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: *Super Mario World* introduced many concepts to action gaming, such as giving the player the ability to revisit levels to find overlooked secrets and rewarding the player for finding all the secret exits in the levels.

1992

Super Mario Bros. Pinball



From the Flyer: The hit videogame comes to pinball! Introducing Gottlieb's new dot matrix display! Mario Mania comes to pinball! Shoot Yoshi's ramp for "quick shot" or the cave for "hidden treasures"! Join Mario and Luigi for adventures in 7 worlds of pinball excitement!

PAC-MAN: "Ever since I was a young boy I've played the silver ball. From Soho down to Brighton I must have played them all. But I ain't seen nothing like him in any amusement hall..." Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: This was Gottlieb's first pin to use a Dot Matrix Display.

1992

Super Mario Bros. Mushroom World Pinball



From the Flyer: Introducing the world's first convertible redemption game... Super Mario Bros. Mushroom World! Finally, a fully adjustable game designed for any size! It's Mario Mania all

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GUNFIGHT, by Sega



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From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: Only 519 of these pinball machines were actually produced.

2000

Mario Kart Arcade GP



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 Would you look at that screenshot - just whom is Mario trailing behind? Yeah, you know that's right! Eat my pac-dust Mario!!! Wocka! Wocka!

From the desk of Professor Pac-Man: This game was co-developed and released by Namco, and as a result it was the first Mario Kart to feature playable crossover characters.

Beyond the Arcades

- 1989 - Super Mario Land
- 1991 - Super Mario Bros. & Friends: When I Grow Up
- 1991 - Mario Teaches Typing
- 1992 - Yoshi
- 1992 - Super Mario Kart
- 1992 - Mario Paint
- 1992 - Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins
- 1993 - Yoshi's Cookie
- 1993 - Mario is Missing!
- 1993 - Mario's Time Machine
- 1993 - Super Mario All-Stars
- 1994 - Hotel Mario
- 1994 - Mario's Early Years: Fun with Letters
- 1994 - Mario's Early Years: Fun with Numbers
- 1994 - Mario's Early Years: Pre-school
- 1994 - Tetris & Dr. Mario
- 1995 - Mario's Game Gallery
- 1995 - Mario's Tennis
- 1995 - Mario Clash
- 1995 - Mario Picross
- 1995 - Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island
- 1996 - Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars
- 1996 - Super Mario 64
- 1997 - Mario Kart 64
- 1997 - Mario Teaches Typing 2
- 1999 - Mario Brothers Deluxe
- 1999 - Mario Golf
- 1999 - Super Smash Bros.
- 1999 - Mario Party
- 2000 - Mario Tennis
- 2000 - Mario Party 2
- 2001 - Paper Mario

- 2001 - Mario Party 3
- 2001 - Super Mario Advance
- 2001 - Mario Kart: Super Circuit
- 2001 - Luigi's Mansion
- 2001 - Super Smash Bros. Melee
- 2001 - Dr. Mario 64
- 2002 - Super Mario Advance 2: Super Mario World
- 2002 - Super Mario Sunshine
- 2002 - Super Mario Advance 3: Yoshi's Island
- 2002 - Mario Party 4
- 2003 - Mario Party 5
- 2003 - Mario Kart: Double Dash
- 2003 - Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3
- 2003 - Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour
- 2004 - Mario vs. Donkey Kong
- 2004 - Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga
- 2004 - Mario Golf: Advance Tour
- 2004 - Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door
- 2004 - Mario Pinball Land
- 2004 - Mario Power Tennis
- 2004 - Mario Party 6
- 2005 - Mario Party Advance
- 2005 - Mario Superstar Baseball
- 2005 - Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix
- 2005 - Dr. Mario & Puzzle League
- 2005 - Mario Party 7
- 2005 - Mario Tennis: Power Tour
- 2005 - Mario & Luigi: Partners In Time
- 2005 - Super Mario Strikers
- 2006 - New Super Mario Brothers
- 2006 - Mario Hoops 3-on-3
- 2006 - Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis
- 2007 - Mario Party 8

- TBA - Mario Strikers Charged
- TBA - Super Mario Galaxy
- TBA - Super Paper Mario
- TBA - Super Smash Bros. Brawl

 I think Mario will forever be known as the guy that has to rescue the princess by jumping around a lot and I as the non-stop munching machine. That's our lot in life. It's not a lot, but it's our life. Wocka! Wocka!

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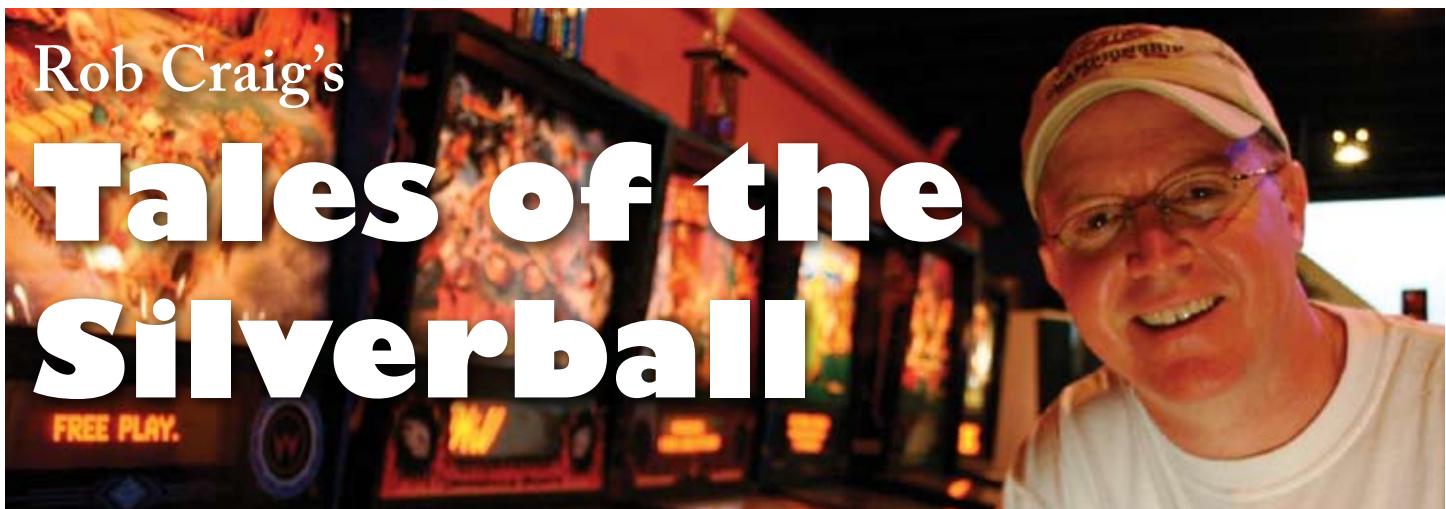
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Tales of the Silverball

Pascal Janin and the Pi-1X4

If your pinball collection includes games like Buck Rogers, Cleopatra, Sinbad, or Genie, you might have heard of Pascal Janin or at least own one of his products. He's the humble mastermind behind several replacement circuit boards for early electronic Gottlieb pinball machines. When I was writing exclusively for Popbumper.com, I wrote up a "one on one" review for Pascal's (then new) Pi-1 replacement CPU for Gottlieb System 1 machines where he clearly inched out the Ni-Wumph board. I'll get into the latest revision of the Pi-1 a bit later in this article. But for those of you not in the Gottlieb early solid state pinball fan base, you'll still want to read on as we discover a little about the inventive mind of a French pinball enthusiast and the story behind his passion.

The story behind the inventor

Pascal Janin is just like most of the readers of this column. He loves pinball. And like a sub-segment of you all (and very much like me), he especially loves the electronics inside that make them work. But more significantly, he manages to bring forth real solutions to complicated electronic problems in pinball machines. I was introduced to him through the Gottlieb pinball collector Peter Hall who resides in Switzerland. Peter had hailed about Pascal's work with reproducing Gottlieb's ever-failing electronic circuit boards. That started a relationship between me and the Frenchman that has lasted several years now.

Pascal's story starts in France in the 70's. His parents would take Pascal and his younger sister to camp sites in Italy, Spain, and Yugoslavia. There were plenty of games for him to play, at costs that were less than 1 cent per game. Aside from this, his grandfather owned a butcher shop across the street

from a bar. With this connection, Pascal was allowed entry as a minor to play some of the later Gottlieb, Williams, and Bally EM machines. Soon afterwards, early solid state games like Gottlieb's Buck Rogers showed up on the pinball scene. Prices per play were slightly less (20 US cents) than the quarters we were dropping here in the US. By 1983



and 84, Pascal and friends were playing *Panthera* and *Pink Panther* every Monday after school with pinball in good circulation at the time. In 1987, he played his last System 1 machine in a street location — a *Countdown* in Lyon, France. He explains that pinball in public places today is just as scarce in France as it is in the US. "Nowadays, it is almost impossible to find a pinball game in a bar, and most of the game rooms have closed down. The last one we had in Grenoble (biggest city close to my home) closed down in

the Summer of 2005. This was the last place around where I could play recent pinball games (*X-files*, *Tales of the Arabian Nights*, *Monopoly..*). I know of another game room in Chambery (1 hour drive) which still has 5 pinball games: *Lord of the Rings*, *Medieval Madness*, *Attack from Mars*, *Star Wars Episode 1*, and *Ripley's*."

And the electronics interest gripped Pascal even earlier than pinball. As a child, he used to keep count of the power transformers around the neighborhood. "When I was very young (3 years old), I always begged my aunt to go on a walk in her village to go see all those huge transformers that were humming out loud. I knew the location of every single transformer by heart. My first electronics kit, a digital clock, was soldered at the age of 9 with a soldering iron with a tip as wide as my thumb. Upon the first trial, I had reversed the transformer by accident and the whole house went dark! After I changed the transformer, it performed well and still does, some 30+ years later!"

As the young electronics enthusiast matured, he worked on (and completed) his Electrical Engineering degree. He spent 14 months in Japan and 15 more months in the US before heading back to France to work for ST Microelectronics in 1995.

"It was actually my wife, being from southern Marseille, France who tentatively dragged me down there and sent me employment leaflets that she had collected at an exhibition. And then I started to work for ST on April 1995. In October 2000, I moved to Grenoble (300km North of Marseille). Since I was hired, I have been working on components testing, application customer support on computer displays, and sound chips for the television market."

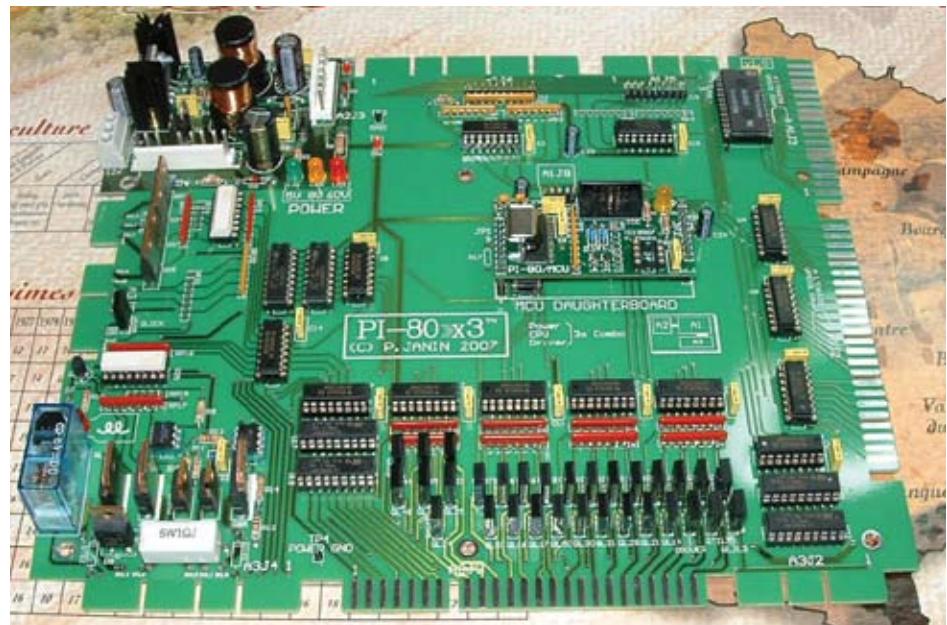


Being at ST has allowed Pascal to fully understand the capabilities of their processor lineup, specifically the ST-7 MCU of which an early generation is used in the Pi-1 and a faster, smaller ST-7 on the Pi-1X4 that replaces nearly all the Gottlieb System 1 hardware. In fact, this little processor is primarily used in computer monitor displays.

Engineer and pinball hobbyist converge

Pinball met engineer when Pascal bought his first few pinball machines. From his childhood pinball memories, early Gottlieb solid state pinball machines were his throwback games of choice. It was while he was working on his second game, a technically disturbed Close Encounters of the Third Kind, that Pascal studied the System 1 board set and realized that its days were numbered. In 1999, he was given a Gottlieb Genie machine and took advantage of a business trip to Taiwan in April 2000 to start work on his own schematics for what would become the Pi-1 CPU board. It was not until a year or so later that news of a replacement board in the US was on the market. Pascal explains, "I had only vaguely heard about the existing Ni-Wumpf board, but the French complained that it had to be ordered from USA, it was expensive (due to unfavorable exchange rates at the time) and additional import custom taxes would apply (25% extra). So I realized that my board could prove helpful to a lot more people than I first thought." Amazingly, from initial concept to real-world working prototype took him only a few months.

It wasn't long until he decided to incorporate the troublesome power supply board, driver board, and eventually the basic



sound board into the printed circuit board ultimately giving birth to what is called the Pi-1X4. With this board, you can remove and discard the large interconnect cable that formally connected the CPU board to the driver board, and also the power supply cable that ran from the power supply board to the CPU board. The x4 name comes from this integration of the 4 parts (CPU, driver board, power supply, and sound board). When asked about the issues involved, he replies, "There were not that many challenges, apart from making sure that the game behaved 100% like the original CPU. There was never any compromise. After I started to design my board, I got feedback from friends that I could split in 2 groups: those who enjoyed novelty and every new feature I could put in and those who wanted the board to be an exact replacement and disabled ALL my new features. I even know a person who never installs one of my boards in his game! He only uses it to debug the game during the fixing phase then he puts an original CPU inside." And as I will explain later, you'll see that the Pi-1 is virtually indestructible when it comes to foul voltages coming from switch or lamp matrix voltages, coil feedback voltage, and even messed up display voltages — all of which would take out "spider chips" on the original CPU board and the custom PAL's on the Ni-Wumph board.

But there's more!

But there is, of course, more inventions to discuss. Starting in 1998, a series of ROM adapters were built. Then a new power supply for the speech capable System 80 and 80A machines, and finally a replacement pop bumper driver board, for System 80 and 80A

machines. And there is still more to come with a Pi-FX universal sound board that replaces the sound boards in at least 26 titles, 28 if you include the non-speech export versions of Volcano and Black Hole. The Pi-1X4 will get a 'type 2' plug-in sound board for those later System 1 machines. But the most exciting item in the testing phase is the replacement System 80 and 80A CPU board.

Is there a demand for early Gottlieb CPU replacements? Consider this: The Pi-1 was first sold in 2001 when 30 boards were distributed at the French pinball expo Vierzon. Since then he averages 80 Pi-1's sold per year and another 50 Pi-1X4's per year. Only 25% are sold to US customers, 5% to Australia, and the majority staying in France. With US sales growing, you still might think that the volume for this product seems low considering the US collector market. There are some interesting French business circumstances along with Pascal's own determination to keep quality at the highest level that keeps the product numbers at some lower numbers. Pascal explains, "in France, starting your own (small or large scale) business is something closer to a nightmare than a dream-come-true. Unthinkable administration hassle (papers, registrations) and high fees and taxes block your way. Considering all of this, if I had to become a professional seller, and made a living out of selling my boards, I would have to work on them night and day, struggle with banks, administration, and double up the prices to pay the tax. I said no-thanks and created my own non-profit association in Dec 2001 to allow me to have a professional bank account and let me distribute my boards at a nominal cost that barely covers my expenses (manufacturing, develop-

ment, protos) and new purchases (software, hardware), without tax and administration hassles. I don't get a single cent on the sales. It's just pure fun as it was meant to be! I also received many proposals from US vendors to distribute my boards there. My major drawback is that all my boards are assembled by non-professional manufacturers (but all the parts are new & professionally made: PCB, components etc., nothing substandard or refurbished), so the manufacturing delays vary a lot. And I am also very picky about the manufacturing quality. I want to have control over it. So this is the price to pay to propose the best boards I have at the lowest possible price and to the maximum of pinball fans around the world. Amateur boards made in a professional way? At least trying to. Of course, if I could make some money out of this, I'd be happy to. But the hassle is just not worth it." So if you want to order a Pascal Janin product, you just have to drop him an e-mail at pascalpi1@aol.com. He'll explain the current production run and give you details on the process to get on the list.

Examining the Pi-1 Product – for the Player

The Pi-1 replacement CPU board is a complete replacement board for the very obsolete original Gottlieb CPU board. Without a complete working board, you don't have a working game. And there are options for you. You can try to find someone to repair your board but this will be quite a project since the majority of the components are no longer available. As mentioned earlier, there is another reproduction that has been around the US for a long time in the Ni-Wumph which includes all the game code for every System 1 machine that was made. Some say that the Ni-Wumph suffers from inaccurate emulation of the original game code. While I can not recall to this personally, I can admit that it doesn't offer too many advances in protection from stray voltages that can take out custom PIC chips. If this happens, your board has to be repaired by Ni-Wumph or someone with an "in" to obtain their custom IC's. That's where Pascal's board takes a nice departure.

With the Pi-1, you can go the quick route and just plug in the board and power on the machine. Note that these are my words after spending a lot of time with the original board and the Ni-Wumph of which I wouldn't dare plug and play without voltage measurements and careful connector pin inspection. Immediately you will notice text flowing across the cool blue fluorescent displays. Here you select



the language for displayed text. And there is a lot of text that allows you to control this board's options. In software you select the specific game you have the board installed in. Once done, you decide which options to install for the game code. There is a 100% original option which doesn't use any of the original code, but very closely emulates the original. Then there are software dipswitch settings that set up number of balls, match configuration, coin mechanism configuration, etc. But from there, things get very interesting. Pascal has jazzed up the original code to make it more like a mid-80's machine. While you can keep it all original, who would want to? Installing the custom versions of the Pascal's game code really brings the game to life. An attract lighting mode runs its routine when the game is at rest. You won't need to drop coins, the board comes up and stays on 99 credits. Hitting the credit button kicks off intro lighting and then a flashing lamp on a random rollover lane (available for most machines) which identifies the new skill shot feature. Making the skill shot flashes all playfield lamps and sends calls to the sound board or chimes unit making sure you are aware of the reward. Should you lose a ball within the first few seconds of play, you get an "I suck extra ball" kicked out to the shooter lane. Every switch that has an associated lamp does a little light flicker show when a ball has tripped the switch. And when you lose the ball, the bonus countdown moves much faster than it used to. If you're able to really pull off a one of a kind game,

you'll have the opportunity to input a 4 digit name. The Pi-1 stores the best 5 scores and scrolls them across the displays during attract mode. Can you roll the game? Pascal's board offers the option of a divide by 10 (losing the last digit) to record those world class scores without a witness!

Doesn't this cheapen the original masterpiece as it was intended to be enjoyed by the end player? That answer is for you to decide. And with Pascal's Pi-1, you get to make a choice. For me, I've been able to see the Pi-1's additional features in Charlie's Angels, Cleopatra, Sinbad, and for this new revision of the board, Genie. Each time I've given the game a first run on the original emulated code and then switched over to the more flashy version. I've yet to convince myself to go backward, and after you see it, I doubt you will, either.

Examining the Pi-1 Product – for the Pinball Repair People

Back in 2003, I received an early version of this board to review on popbumper.com. Today, the board has evolved through several changes. In brief, the prototype was put together around June of 2000. In March of 2001, the earliest revision was built which evolved into a 2 sided PCB in 2002. Minor improvements continued through 2005 with items like silk-screening connector locations on the PCB. But since 2005, the board was completely re-drawn with component layout changing and a very stout switch matrix buffer capable of withstanding a direct 30V



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short without feedback damage. And since Fall of 2006, all PCB's now have gold plated contact points to ensure "a lifetime of flawless performance" according to Pascal.

If you are looking for something made strong with easily replaceable components, you'll love this board. Putting the board in your hands will convince you that it's well made. There are multiple ways to connect the playfield switch row and column connections. Pascal put together .100" pins that parallel J-6 and J-7 so you can build custom connectors for in the event that you've "had it" with some of those original edge connectors. LED's indicate that you have proper CPU voltage (green) and give you the pulse of the ST-7 brain (red). Everything is laid out in machined sockets for easy replacement should you need it. Silkscreened information covers the front side to make it smooth in connecting to original connectors. And there's this one little jumper near the bottom left that kills off the troublesome Slam Tilt switch that was designed to be normally closed. Should you power up and get "SLAM TILT" displaying in your blue fluorescents, simply plug in a jumper here and your problem tilt switch no longer matters.

Troubleshooting issues with the board is a breeze due to the large amount of feedback you get from the software. You can pulse each individual coil and lamp, test all switches and obtain switch number feedback on the displays, and run display tests. Since connectors seem to be a large problem with these machines, Pascal's diagnostics can pretty much lead you right to the switch pin(s) that are causing dead columns or rows. But the

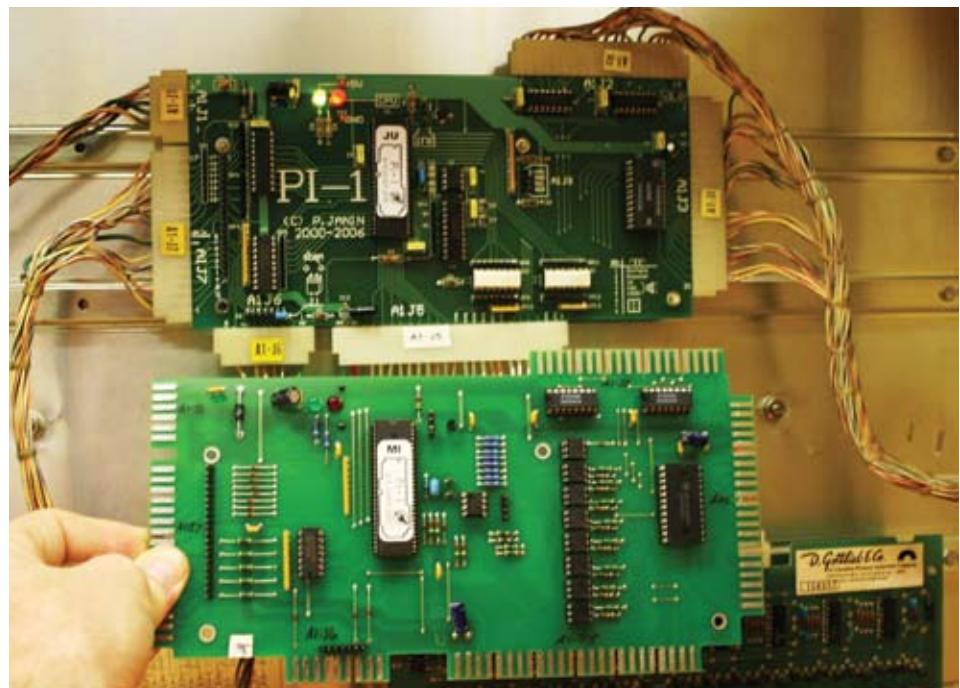
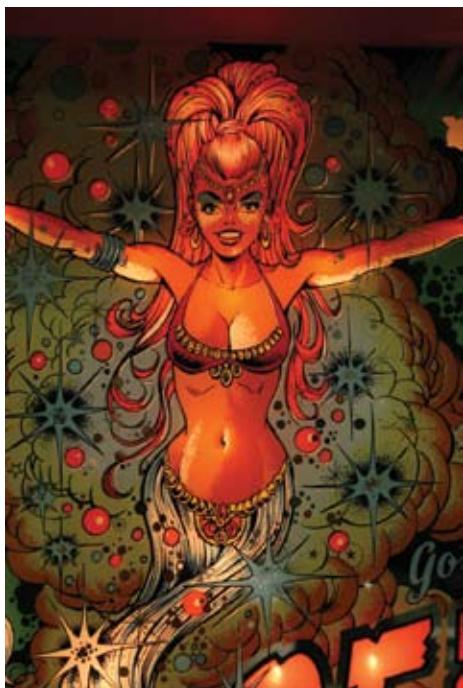


real strength with the board in my opinion is its ability to take a voltage hit from feedback. With the original board set, if you had a coil that had lost its diode and was feeding back a high magnetic collapse voltage into the driver board, it could pass this as a spike into the CPU board and take out one of the spider chips. On the Ni-Wumph, it would destroy one of the custom PIC chips. The same protection is true for the high voltage displays. If disconnected or re-connected while the machine is on, you could expect the same result with the original board or the Ni-Wumph. But the Pi-1 is loaded with protection from the end user and aging (and shorting) connector pins.

And one of the best freebies that come with any of Pascal's products is the open line

of communication with the developer. If you think you have a great idea that should be included in a specific game package, an improvement to the physical system, or even a discovered typo in the operating manual, simply drop him an e-mail.

If you can believe it, there is even more to this board. The old review of the 2003 Pi-1 is still available for you to read in its entirety on Popbumper.com under Legacy Articles / Reviews and covers many of those details. Pascal Janin can be reached at pascalpi1@aol.com for more information. You can expect more reviews of Pascal's products in upcoming issues of GameRoom Magazine, including the System 80 replacement which will feature many of the same "beyond original" items found in the Pi-1. **GR**



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The WAYBACK Machine



by David Ellis

Wisdom from the Past

It's a sunny morning in San Francisco, the fourth day of the annual Game Developers Conference. It's only about 9:30 AM, an hour at which many game developers are normally just rolling out of bed and shuffling toward their first cup of coffee. Even at GDC, where the first classes and roundtables start at 9:00, only the hardest and most devoted designers, artists, and programmers arrive at the convention center before 10.

Today is different, though. There's already a line extending over a block from the front door of the Moscone Center's South Hall. Within a half hour, the line is all the way around the building. People are buzzing much more excitedly than they normally would when standing in such a long line at such an early hour. The most surprising thing about this scenario, however, isn't the time or the absence of impatience at having to wait in an hour-long queue. It's what these people are here to see. Based on the most prevalent topics of the classes and lectures at GDC this year, one might expect that the crowd is there to see the latest offerings from Microsoft or Sony—some new demo or game that will dazzle them with mind-blowing graphics the likes of which those of us who grew up on the video games of the 70s and 80s would have never thought possible when we were their age.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The people in this line are here to listen to a keynote speech given by one of the most respected and revered video game designers in the industry today. But, unlike many of the other successful designers speaking at the conference this year, this person has been around since the beginning. And from

the moment he first became involved in video games, pretty much everything he has touched has turned to pixilated gold.

They are here to see Shigeru Miyamoto.

As Miyamoto-san takes the stage, well over a thousand people rise to their feet and greet



him with thunderous applause. He is primarily here to talk about the new Nintendo Wii, which he was involved in creating. But he starts his presentation with a bit of his personal history—a summary of the games he has designed. And, of course, the first image that appears on the screen is one of a coin-op *Donkey Kong* machine—his first game.

By the year 1980, video games were tak-

ing the world by storm. Here in the United States, Atari was the primary force behind video game craze but, starting with the introduction of *Space Invaders*, Japanese game companies began to establish a foothold in the US market as well. *Space Invaders* did so well here that Taito, the game's manufacturer, decided to open a US division. Taito's success inspired other Japanese companies to test the American waters as well.

One of these companies was Nintendo, a manufacturer of *hanafuda* playing cards that had been around for nearly a century. Nintendo was doing fairly well in the electronic game business in Japan but the president of the company, Hiroshi Yamauchi, wasn't satisfied with domestic success. He sent his son-in-law, Minoru Arakawa to the United States. The goal: break into the lucrative US video game market.

Nintendo of America set up shop in Manhattan in 1980, and rented a warehouse in New Jersey. Arakawa hired a small trucking company called Chase Express to distribute the games. The owners, Al Stone and Ron Judy, had experience in importing and marketing coin-op video games. They agreed to work on commission.

This was a decision they initially regretted. The first coin-op game that Nintendo of America imported for distribution was *Radar Scope*. The game play was similar to both *Space Invaders* and *Galaxian*. But, despite its similarity to these popular games and the success Nintendo had enjoyed with this title in Japanese arcades, *Radar Scope* was a dud in the American market.

Of the 3,000 *Radar Scope* machines imported to the US, only about a third of the games sold. The rest sat in the warehouse. It

was decided that the remaining *Radar Scope* cabinets could be converted to another game to save the cost of shipping new cabinets and to move the existing games out of storage. But the replacement game had to be something that would appeal to the American audience.

Back in Japan, Yamauchi was desperate to make his US operation work, but he had no game designers available to create a new game to replace *Radar Scope*. He had to take a chance, and he had a designer in mind.

Shigeru Miyamoto was, at the time, a long-haired happy-go-lucky graphic artist who had been with Nintendo for about three years. Miyamoto was a fan of bluegrass music who enjoyed playing the banjo and designing toys in his spare time. His only connection to the video game portion of Nintendo's business up to that point was the design of the cabinet art for *Sheriff* and *Radar Scope*.

When Yamauchi asked Miyamoto to design a video game, the artist jumped at the chance. His only real guideline was that the game had to work in the existing *Radar Scope* cabinets—and that the game should be fresh, innovative, and a potential hit. Everything else was up to him.

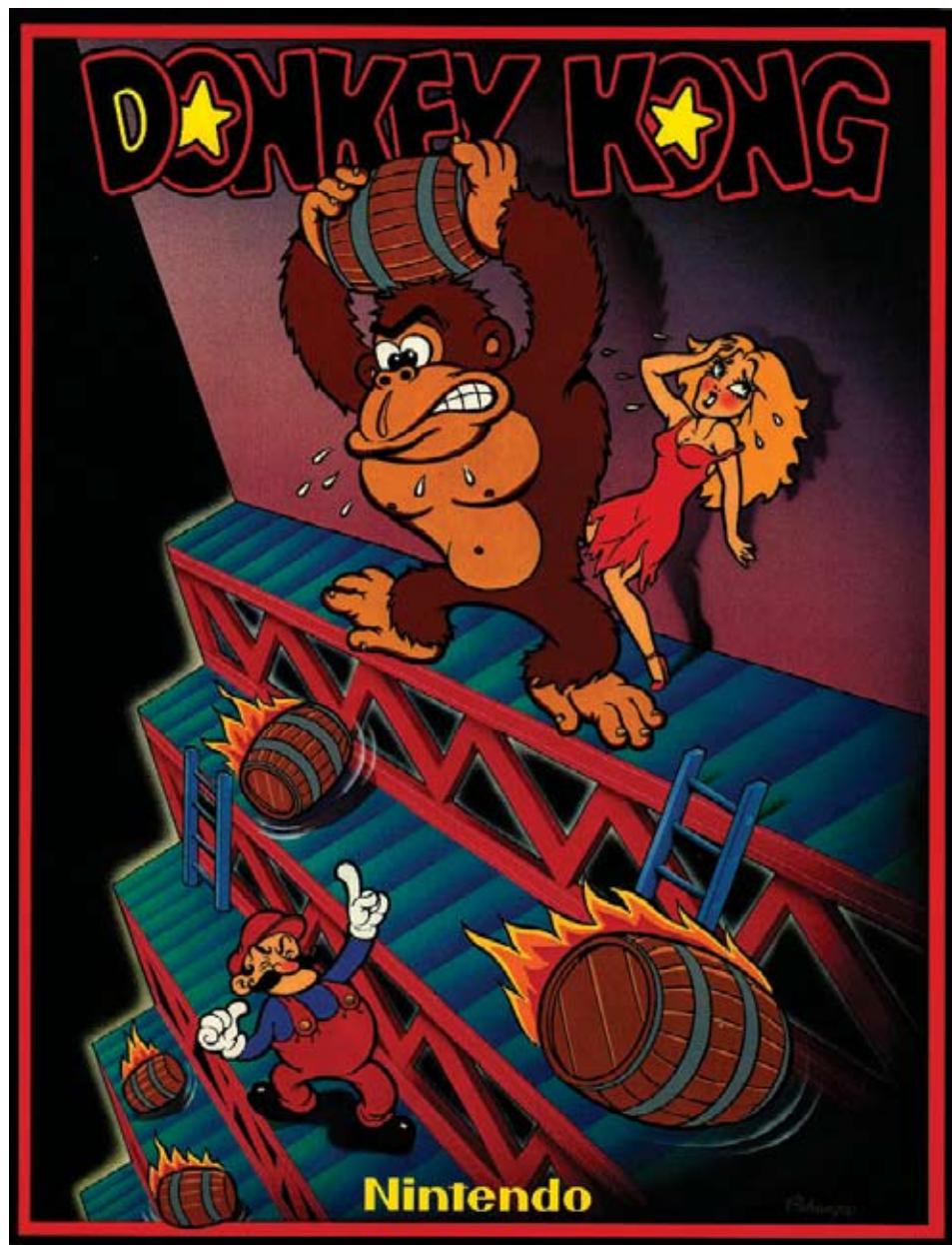
Miyamoto began his game design by creating the story behind the game: an escaped gorilla captured the girlfriend of an innocent carpenter. It would be the player's job to help the carpenter to rescue his girlfriend.

When choosing a name for his game, Miyamoto relied on a Japanese-to-English dictionary. He wanted the name to describe the antagonist of the game, the "stubborn gorilla." Using his dictionary, Miyamoto came up with a rough English translation.

Back in the United States, Arakawa and his contractors awaited the arrival of Miyamoto's new game. When Judy and Stone found out that the name of the game was *Donkey Kong*, they were positive that this was the end of the line for Nintendo of America. They stuck with Arakawa because he seemed positive that the game would be a hit, but they were definitely looking for a way out.

Arakawa test marketed *Donkey Kong* at two bars in Seattle, Washington. The game was an instant success. By this time, Nintendo of America was hurting for money, so it was up to Arakawa, Judy, and Stone to convert all 2,000 of the remaining *Radar Scope* machines into *Donkey Kong*. (As most collectors know, these first 2,000 *Donkey Kong* machines are the red cabinet versions that still turn up occasionally today.)

Nintendo finally got its foothold in America. *Donkey Kong* was an unqualified hit. The



converted *Radar Scopes* sold out quickly, and Arakawa began manufacturing *Donkey Kong* machines here in the United States at the Nintendo warehouse because shipments from Japan were too slow to keep up with demand. At the height of the game's popularity, Nintendo of America was turning out as many as 250 machines a day. After a rocky start, Nintendo's US operation did over \$10 million in sales in its second year, selling over 60,000 *Donkey Kong* machines.

In addition to making a hit video game, Miyamoto had managed to create two video game characters that endure to this day. One of them was Donkey Kong himself, who went on to star in a number of coin-op and console games in the years and decades that followed.

The other character he created eventually became Nintendo's symbol and one of the most recognized game characters of all

time. The valiant carpenter who matched wits with a stubborn gorilla in *Donkey Kong* originally had the rather uninspired moniker "Jumpman." While Arakawa and others at Nintendo of America were attempting to come up with a better name for the character, legend has it that the landlord of Nintendo's New Jersey warehouse knocked at the door to inform Arakawa that the rent was overdue. This Italian gentleman's name was Mario Segali, and he apparently bore some resemblance to Jumpman. At that moment, a legend was born. Mario has been Nintendo's flagship character ever since.

Miyamoto was the designer behind a number of the classic coin-op era's greatest games. He was responsible for *Donkey Kong Junior*, *Mario Bros.*, and *Super Mario Bros.* to name a few. His days as a junior graphic artist at Nintendo were at an end. Shigeru Miyamoto was a video game designer—and he would go

on to become one of the greatest video game designers of all time.

In his keynote speech at the 2007 Game Developers Conference, you can see the delight in Miyamoto's face as he talks about the future of the video game industry. For some time, he has been involved in hardware as well as software design at Nintendo. He is extremely excited about the effects that the handheld Nintendo DS and the revolutionary Nintendo Wii are having on the way people look at video games. Instead of being a pastime for a small segment of the population, the innovative interfaces and accessible game play of these systems are introducing whole new audiences to the video game world. He laughingly uses a scale called the "wife-ometer" to gauge the consoles' success.

Despite the fact that Miyamoto has been deeply involved in video games for over two decades and is an avid player as well as a designer, his wife wanted nothing to do with video games—until very recently. The accessibility and wide appeal of games like *Brain Age* and *Nintendogs* on the DS got his wife to take an interest in video games—and made the wife-ometer rise. The fun and intuitive interface of the Wii made the wife-ometer

rise again, as his wife took an active interest in playing *Wii Sports* and started boasting to him that she can beat his high scores. Finally, Miyamoto realized that the wife-ometer had hit its peak when he came home from work one night to find his wife playing with the Wii on her own, creating new Mii characters (avatars that players can create using the console's built-in character generator). Miyamoto sees basic creativity of this kind as the first step to putting game design in the hands of the player instead of exclusively in the hands of the designer.

Miyamoto finds this extremely exciting, and says that he is encouraging his wife's creativity. He jokes that someday she will design an entire video game on her own. And on that day, he can finally retire.

As the crowd files out after the keynote address, they are all still buzzing with excitement. During the speech, they hung on Miyamoto's every word, and he has managed to do in person what he has always done through his games—delight and inspire.

As I move along with the rapidly dispersing crowd, I realize that I have just experienced a convergence of the two facets of my video game life—the collector of vintage coin-op games and the designer of current

console and PC games have shared a moment of Zen. Sadly, it's an all-too-rare occurrence. Although I try to bring the theory and fun of the classic games I grew up on into the games I design as often as I can, there is a prevailing feeling in the industry today that discourages the old in favor of the new. If it comes down to a choice between hot graphics and deep game play, game play gets the shaft almost every time.

Coming out of Shigeru Miyamoto's keynote speech, however, I realize that there are those out there that still believe that the basics of good video game design still count, and that the master himself has just communicated that very clearly to thousands of game developers. I don't doubt that everybody in that crowd learned something about what makes a video game fun from a man who has been making fun games since the day he first introduced all of us to a stubborn gorilla with a penchant for kidnapping.

If they can take away a tidbit of video game design knowledge from an hour of hearing Shigeru Miyamoto talking about what makes games fun, just think what the video game developers of today might learn if they spent a few hours playing in our home arcades.

Imagine the possibilities... **GR**

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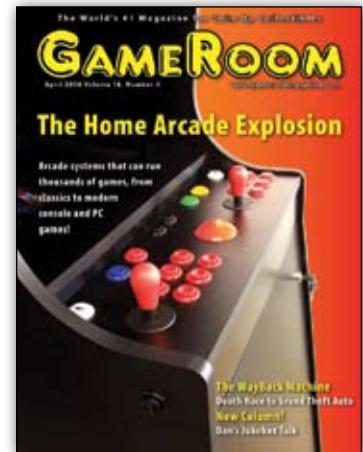
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GAME ROOM Magazine's

GameRoom OF THE Month

by Jay Overman



The title of Jay Overman's submission pretty much sums up much of the game room experience for me: pretty lights. I'm not ashamed to admit it: I like the blinky lights, and apparently, so does Jay. His amazing collection of advertising light signs glows, blinks, and yes, bathes his game room in a warm, inviting light. It's obvious that he's been bitten by the collecting bug in a big way, and he's got the displays to prove it. It's not always about the games, folks! — Kevin

It's All About The Pretty Lights

I am 33 years old and "I have a disease". There is no cure and it gets progressively worse with age. You will not see this disease on any A&E television special. The disease is commonly known as collectitas and I have personally suffered for years. I blame my father who would take me to the T&W flea market as a kid. This was back in the day when the flea market actually had antiques and garage sale items unlike the cheap tools, silk flowers and tube socks that fill the booths today. We would go every Saturday and one day I passed a Schlitz sign on a table. The thought of having something that you can't buy in a store, that came from a bar (where I wasn't allowed) and lit up was just too cool. I had to have it, so I asked my father for \$10.00 and I bought the sign at face value (I learned to haggle later). The sign wasn't anything special, just a plastic box with Schlitz printed on the front lit with a fluorescent bulb. I hung it up in my room and stared at it for hours. While most of the other kids were playing with Matchbox cars, Transformers and Star Wars figures, I was spending most of my weekends going to different swap meets, antique shops and flea markets looking for signs. I had my small room completely covered with advertising.

My first encounter with a motion sign was in New Orleans at the French Market where I picked up a Blue Nun clock and a Perrier sign which was a plastic bottle on top of a metal box. I thought it just lit up till I got home, plugged it in and to my amazement the bubbles in the bottle on top started to flicker. I immediately took it apart to see what made it work. I was hooked.

There are literally millions of advertising pieces out there for just about anything. I focus on the brewery signs because they seem to have put a lot of money and thought into their advertising pieces (ironically, I





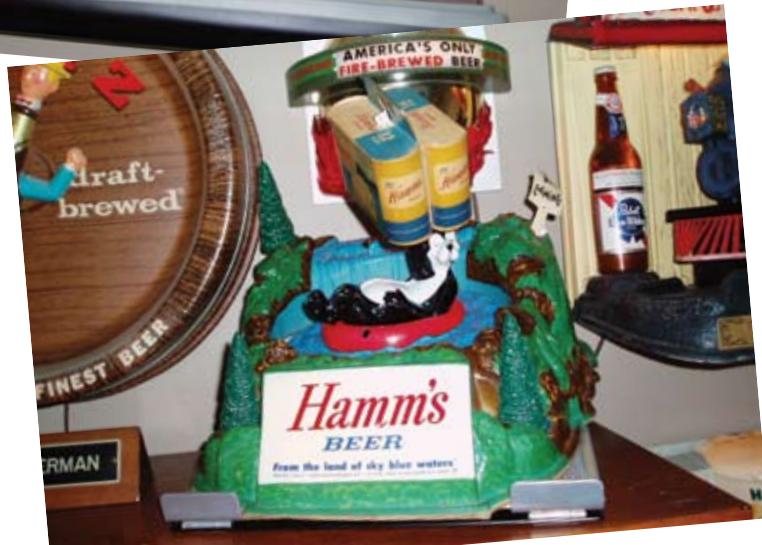
rarely drink any beer). A few of the larger breweries produced most of the really unique signs: Hamm's, Schlitz, Blatz, Pabst. Miller, Falstaff, and a few others. There doesn't seem to be a shortage of these signs out there but they are getting harder to find complete and clean. Most of these signs are available and can be found on ebay with relative ease. You can expect to pay anywhere from \$50.00 to \$400.00 for a clean working motion sign, depending on the brewery. Some of the more obscure or local breweries fetch upwards of \$500 - \$1,000 for a motion or static lighted display.

One sign in particular seems to defy the laws of supply and demand and that is the Hamm's rotator. There are several different variations of this sign and at least five or more of these can be found on eBay at any given time and still fetch anywhere from \$700.00 up (I've seen as high as \$1,400). It is a beautiful and well made sign that features a scrolling lifelike camp and waterfall scene. As you watch the sign the water appears to move and the campfire flickers. Well worth the money if you ask me.

Most of the signs light up and have different ways of attracting your/my attention. Some use colored dancing lights, some revolve slowly, while others try and simulate bubbling or pouring beer. One of my personal favorites is the Blatz Tapper Bar sign which features the Bottle Man pulling down a tap while the beer drops into the Can Man's mug while the sign on the front of the bar raises and lowers.

In one of my searches for signs I ran across a *Playboy* Pinball machine and thought that would really be neat to have. It lit up, you can play it and it also came from a bar (the sexy girls were also a bonus) I made payments for it and finally got it home. I was sixteen then and since then I have found, fixed or sold about forty games. My current keepers are a *Nitro Ground Shaker*, *Captain Fantastic*, *Bowling Queen*, *Centaur*, 1978 *Star Trek*, *Sure Shot* and my favorite game of all time, *Twilight Zone*.

Besides pinball and advertising signs I also have a passion for restoring gas pumps. Yes, they also light up! I do all the restorations myself from fabrication to body work and painting. I have started to appreciate the old patina that a game or gas pump might have when I get it and don't try so hard anymore to make them "like new". I just clean them up real good, replace any necessary parts and make sure they work. I will still re-chrome or touchup where necessary but for the most part I let the item show its age.



I have a house full of signs, gas pumps and pinball machines that I neatly display with pride. I am fortunate to have a wife who also enjoys my passion and supports me in my hobbies. Yes, there are women out there that like this stuff! I am always looking for new items and a new house to put them in. I still have collectitas although it sometimes goes away (coincidentally when my funds get low!)

Most of my collection can be viewed on www.MotionSignMan.com. I have included small movie files for some of the really neat motion signs.—Jay Overman

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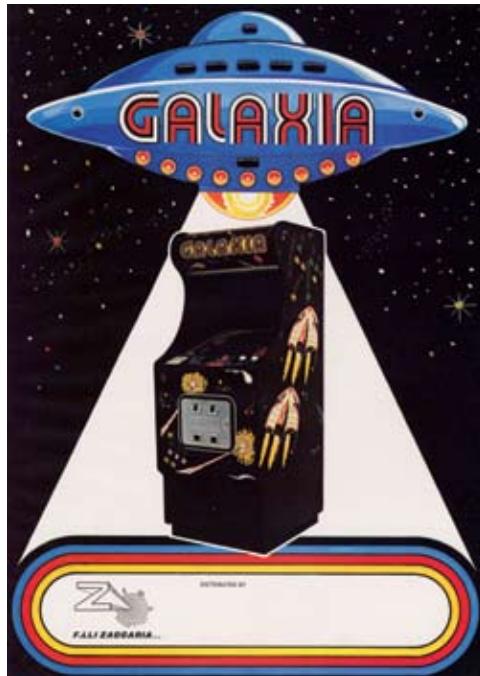
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Classic Arcade Flyer Galaxian by Namco (1979)

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GameRoom Reviews

X-Arcade TankStick Arcade Style Gaming for your PC and Game Consoles

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Take Aim and Fire!

I own quite a few X-Arcade controllers and love them all, but this is perhaps one of their most logical and fun products to date. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present the *Tankstick*—a dual player arcade controller with a trackball dropped right into the center of the unit for your classic gaming pleasure.

For me perhaps one of the most important aspects of the X-Arcade line up has always been the physical build of their products. Using industrial grade materials such as commercial MDF, Control Panel Overlays and custom parts (more on that in a bit) this 20lb. controller feels positively solid and made to last.

Let's take a quick look at the specs as per X-Arcade:

- PS/2 and USB Support
- Trackball Functions As A Standard 3 Button Mouse (PC/MACs only, NOT consoles)
- 4 Left/Right Pinball Flipper Buttons
- Fully Programmable For Support On Gametap™ Service
- Add-On Adapters Work On Any Game System (no console support for Trackball)
- 30 Day Money Back Guarantee
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- Ships with 18 Full Version Arcade Games including: 12 Atari® Classics for PC Use: *Asteroids*®, *Asteroids™ Deluxe*, *Battlezone*®, *Centipede*®, *Crystal Castles™*, *Gravitar™*, *Millipede*™, *Missile Command*®, *Pong*™, *Super Breakout*®, *Tempest*® and *Warlords*® and 6 Full Version Midway Titles! *Gauntlet*®, *Defender*®, *Smash TV*®, *Robotron*®, *Rampage*® and *Joust*®.

The controller is immediately usable out of the box as a two-player unit on many consoles using one of their adapters. Some of the consoles include the original Xbox, Dreamcast, PS1 and PS2, the GameCube. Unfor-

tunately Xbox 360 support is not available due to a lockdown by Microsoft on 3rd party controllers. As of now there are complicated work-arounds, but none officially supported by X-Arcade.

The other main feature is the use of the unit with either a PC or Mac for play in Mame™ and other games that utilize a joystick and basic buttons. This is where the trackball in particular shines, as the trackball is **only** usable with a PC/Mac, **not** consoles.



The actual set up is super easy. With consoles you literally just plug/play. With a PC/Mac you may have to make some minor adjustment within Mame™ or your game of choice but once you're set up you'll instantly realize that you've never really played an arcade game on your PC/Mac until you've used a real arcade style controller.

There are buttons a plenty on the Tankstick with each side having over 8 buttons for use depending on the game that's being played whether it be a PC/Mac or console. The best part of the design is the ability to edit button functions using the programma-

ble X-Arcade on board encoder when using the stick with a PC/Mac.

One example of how I've used such a function is that I reprogrammed the X-Arcade for use with the CD Rom game Dragon's Lair that I could not remap on my PC. I simply reprogrammed the X-Arcade to the appropriate joystick and buttons to play the way I wished it to play and it worked perfectly.

Trackball games such as Centipede are a true pleasure to play with using the center trackball. Others such as Golden Tee also obviously work perfectly and the trackball can be "locked" into position (not mechanically, within software) with a touch of a button on the back of the unit to get a perfect swing every time if you want to play with that cheat enabled.

If you haven't played a trackball game since the classic arcade days with a true trackball, you'll instantly be aware of just how much of the original gaming experience you were missing when you set up the Tankstick. You can also use the trackball to control spinner games such as Breakout, Tempest and more, but I feel that it doesn't feel all that natural. They are playable though if you don't want to buy one of the many spinner options out there right now.

In regard to the buttons and parts, they're all custom made for X-Arcade and are literally branded as such. Kevin has done an in-depth review of the X-Arcade parts and sticks over at RetroBlast in the past, so I won't review them again here, but the parts perform as designed.

If you're an arcade purist and wishes to use buttons such as Happ controls buttons and/sticks, you can literally swap them out with the existing buttons/stick if you want to do that as they'll drop right into place.

Personally, I used my original X-Arcade Solo for over a year before I swapped out the parts for Happ's, but I did that merely for the fun of the modification, not because any of the parts didn't perform or were failing.

All in all, this is another well built and fun product from X-Arcade for the plug/play crowd. But, there's also enough opportunity for the budding modder to get their start with the X-Arcade as their first stick to modify and make it their own.

Check out my video review over at RetroBlast.com to see the stick in action and how it looks when taken apart. — Mitch Gerson

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Auction Watch

by Tim Ferrante and Scott Voisin



The Feedback Loop

As a frequent eBay user, I place a lot of emphasis on feedback. When I sell things, I rely on the feedback I've established to help put a potential buyer's mind at ease so he or she knows they're dealing with an honest person. Conversely, when I'm searching for items to purchase, a seller's feedback will ultimately be the deciding factor on whether or not I bid. I know you can't please everybody all of the time, so one or two negatives sprinkled through 500 positives doesn't really bother me. But when the amount of praise is running neck-and-neck with the amount of complaints, that's a person that I'd rather not get involved with.

Feedback was originally devised as a guide to help warn buyers to stay clear from unreliable sellers and potential thieves, but a few days ago, I heard a story on the news about how crooks were manipulating the system in a new scam to help separate trusting folks from their hard-earned cash.

Here's how it works: A bad guy starts selling a lot of low-to-mid-range items dirt cheap. He racks up the sales because the prices are so low, and he busts his butt to get the items delivered as quickly as possible. With great deals and incredibly fast service, his positive feedback goes through the roof. At that point, the bad guy then begins offering high-end, high-dollar merchandise. Buyers take a look at his feedback, see that his reputation is impeccable, and don't think twice about doing business with him. Money changes hands but nothing ever gets shipped. By the time the buyers get tired of waiting for their stuff to arrive and start claiming fraud with eBay, the bad guy has racked up \$20,000 and disappeared into the night.

From a criminal's point of view, this scam is brilliant on a couple of levels. One, the crook didn't have to buy expensive items in order to lure people into bidding because the things he offered for auction never existed. The bad guy scoured the internet, found pictures of the big-ticket merchandise and used them in his listings. Unless you specifically ask to see an item in person before bidding, how can you be sure the guy really has possession of it? And two, the scam exploits feedback, the very safety valve that was supposed to deter this kind of activity. He had sold hundreds of items and his rating was 100% positive. Anybody who looks at feedback to determine the credibility of a seller would never have any reason to believe that he wasn't on the up-and-up.

eBay has made huge advances in order to protect buyers and sellers, but at the end of the day, it is still a marketplace based on trust. You place a bid, send your money and hope you eventually get what you paid for. For over ten years, it's a system that's worked most of the time. But with scams like these going on, how much longer can it last? —Scott Voisin

Coin-Op Auction Results (Compiled from eBay®)

AMAZING SALES!

Williams Medieval Madness \$5990
Bally Capt. Fantastic (HUO!) \$2500
Gottlieb Rocketship pinball \$2325
Gottlieb Haunted House pinball \$2227
Bally Tapper arcade video \$1400
Rock-Ola Model 1478 jukebox \$5495
Arkon Sexy Girl pinball flyer \$77
Henry Phalibois Magician Automaton \$170,000

PINBALL MACHINES

Secret Service \$850
King of Diamonds \$535
Humpty Dumpty \$1575
Big Hit \$610
Sinbad \$599
Junkyard \$1975
Funhouse \$3802
The Addams Family \$3700
Guns N' Roses \$2975
Roadshow \$2075
Indianapolis 500 \$1902
Star Trek (Data East) \$1888
Dolly Parton \$1247
Drop-A-Card \$1227
Hot Shots \$1195
Viper Night Drivin' \$1525
Flash Gordon \$1500
Hurricane \$1455
Radical \$1399
Bobby Orr Powerplay \$800
Big Daddy \$765
The Machine-Bride of Pinbot \$735
Doctor Who \$1516

ARCADE VIDEO

Dance Dance Revolution 8th Mix \$5200
Off Road Challenge s/d (pair) \$3000
Daytona USA Twin s/d \$2450
Tron u/r \$1795
Golden Tee Golf 2005 \$1750
Time Crisis II 2 plyr \$1726
Star Trek Voyager s/d \$1414
Atari Star Wars \$1195
Hydro Thunder s/d \$1077
San Francisco Rush Extreme \$1000
Star Wars Racer Arcade \$1000
Cruisin'World s/d \$900
Crazy Taxi u/r \$811
Asteroids \$770
Top Skater 50" \$750
Centipede \$645
Dig Dug \$725
Dirt Dash s/d \$695
In the Groove 2 dance \$7600

JKUEROBOXES

Aireon 1200 "Airliner" \$1900
Rowe Model C CD-100 (Ruby) \$1275
Rowe Model E CD-100 \$1200
NSM Sapphire CD-100 \$1030
NSM Firebird II CD wallmount \$761
NSM Digital Thunder CD wallmount \$735
Seeburg V \$4500
Seeburg 222 \$3900
Seeburg KD 200 \$3600
Wurlitzer 1080 \$5567
Wurlitzer 1500 \$2625
Rock-Ola 1493 \$1042
Rock-Ola 490 \$430

SLOT MACHINES

Mills High Top Black Beauty 5¢ \$2851
Mills High Top Arrow Head 10¢ \$1800
Mills Aikens Front 25¢ \$1750
Mills Diamond 25¢ \$1600
Mills Lion Head 5¢ \$1326
Jennings "Today" 5¢ \$1800
Watling Blue Seal 5¢ \$1225
Sammy Popeye pachislo \$249
IGT Haywire \$799

PAPER

Haunted House pinball flyer \$36
Capt. Fantastic pinball flyer \$20
Battlezone arcade video flyer \$10
Tempest arcade video flyer \$10
Pinball! book by Roger Sharpe \$20
GameRoom magazine (5/04-12/06) \$23
RePlay magazine 11 issues 1985 \$41
Always Jukin' 20 issues (1988/9) \$11
Williams Pit Stop pinball man/schem \$20

COIN OPERATED

Williams Slugfest pitch n' bat \$1350
Sam's Billiards air hockey \$725
Arachnid Galaxy Top Gun dart \$1500
Garfield kiddie ride \$1230
Hollywood Skill Crane \$720
Chicago Coin Esquire puck bowler \$1541
Parker Bohn III Pro Bowler puck bowler \$1724
ICE Super Chexx bubble hockey \$2000
(4) Sammy Sports Arena merchandisers \$1600
Williams Base Hit pitch n' bat \$1250
13-ft. Skeeball Classic \$1295

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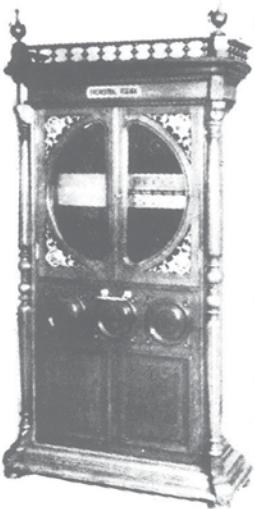
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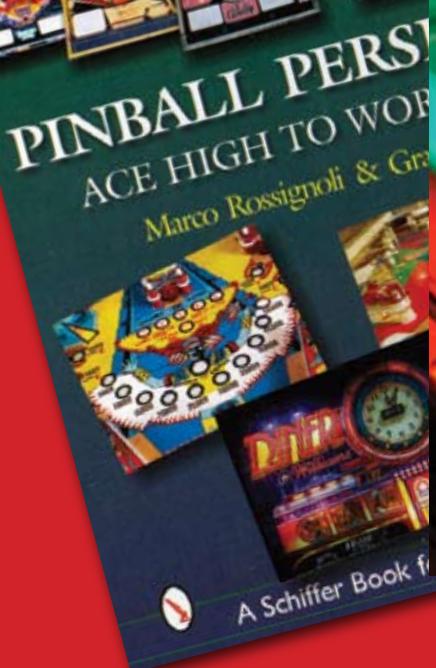
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Latest Rankings (as of 4/1/2007)

1	Keith Elwin	482.75
2	Trent Augenstein	261.36
3	Chris Newsom	255.55
4	Josh Sharpe	255.05
5	Bowen Kerins	235.00
6	Zach Sharpe	231.15
7	Neil Shatz	219.25
8	Jim Belsito	185.80
9	Mats Runsten	180.18
10	Donavan Stepp	153.99
11	Jörgen Holm	151.75
12	Fredrik Lindberg	149.24
13	Jorian Engelbrektsson	117.98
14	Andy Rosa	105.10
15	Eden Stamm	101.12
16	Roy Wils	101.00
17	John Miller	96.70
18	Karl Broström	95.66
19	Paul Madison	94.75
20	Per Holknekt	86.25
21	Patrik Bodin	81.75
22	Michael Lindström	80.43
23	Derek Fugate	75.75
24	Andreas Harre	73.50
25	Albert Medaillon	72.50

March 2007 Tournament Winners

Jasons Billiards Monthly Tournament

Mateo Leyba, Adam Lefkoff, Tim Metevier, Mark Burkett

Lyons Classic Pinball Tournament

Donavan Stepp, Kevin Ryan, Ryan Sharp, Denny Powers

Ohio Wizards Tournament

Trent Augenstein, Chris Newsom, Matthew Clark

Gothenburg Monthly Final

Karl Broström, Henrik Tomson, Carl Borgentun, Johan Genberg

Stockholm Pinballs Pokaltävling

Mats Runsten, Jorian Engelbrektsson, Magnus Rostö, Fredrik Lindberg

Brazilian Pinball Tournament

Marcos, Juba, Sylvio Gomes, Coelho

Pinball Circus

David Gorka, Terry Web, Tina Curtis

Texas Pinball Festival

Zach Sharpe, Don Brownback, Jim Belsito, Ed Most, Mike Ostrandick, Brian Dominy, Brian Bannon, Eden Stamm, Trent Augenstein

Rochester Gameroom Show

Eric Bentsen, John Flitton, Steven Bowden, Bruce Nightingale

ASI/IFPA Championships

Bowen Kerins, Keith Elwin, Neil Shatz



Old Games, New World Records

The wheels of classic arcade gaming never stop moving as big arcade world records were posted this last month, among them a new world record on California Speed (Yosemite track) by Blaine Locklair and a new Donkey Kong world record of 1,049,100 points achieved on March 23, 2007 by Steve Wiebe of Redmond, WA.

—Walter Day, President, Twin Galaxies
TwinGalaxies.com

Aeroboto	3,272,900	Charles Dahling	Anchorage, AK	20-Jan-85
After Burner II	505,050	Jimmy Cardenas	Voorhees, NJ	20-Apr-97
Alpine Racer (Gate Racing/Expert)	02:02.900	Ken Patrick	USA	20-Apr-97
Alpine Racer 2 (High Speed/Gate Racing)	01:47.490	Ray Richards	California	10-Aug-99
Alpine ski	500,774	Eric Olofson	Desert Hot Springs, CA	23-Nov-82
APB	79,411	Brian Kuh	Hoboken, NJ	1-Jun-06
Aqua Jet -Fastest Race	3:16.700	Ron Uliano	Concord, NH	15-Jan-99
Area 51	324,700	Frank Bryan	California, PA	20-Apr-97
Arm Wrestling	781,030	Mark Haber	New York, NY	28-Jun-86
Astro Fighter	26,150	Fred Pastore	Medford, MA	13-Nov-04
Bagman	6,840,850	Jerry McCloskey	Penticton, BC, Can	2-Aug-83
Batman	57,451	Mr. Kelly Flewin	Winnipeg, MB, Can	19-Nov-05
Battle Slug	24,000	Bill Toups	Springfield, MO	20-Apr-97
Bega's Battle	120,000	Steve Harris	Kansas City, MO	18-Jul-83
Blasteroids	2,773,840	Mark Twitty	Garden Grove, CA	20-Apr-88
Bosconian	2,913,510	Ken McLeod	Halifax, NS, Can	24-Feb-83
Burger Time	9,000,000	Bryan Wagner	Turbotville, PA	2-Jun-06
California Speed (Yosemite)	2:01.550	Blaine Locklair	Summerville, SC	6-Mar-07
Captain America & The Avengers	496,801	Josh Bycer	Voorhees, NJ	20-Apr-97
Cerberus	101500	Robert Haukup	Seattle, WA	27-Jun-85
Change Lanes	3,208,112	Stephen Beall	Santa Maria, CA	26-Dec-83
Chase H.Q.(World)	3,596,680	Brian Kuh	Hoboken, NJ	1-Jun-06
Cosmic Alien	105310	Ben Smestad	Kenosha, WI	4-Apr-83
Cruis'n Exotica (Alaska)	1:12.730	Wayne Folsom	Houma, LA	19-Feb-01
Cruis'n USA (Appalachia)	1:49.430	Geoffrey Miller	Springfield, MO	20-Apr-97
Cruis'n World (Africa)	1:28.230	Patrick Mundt	McHenry, IL	10-Jul-99
Dark Silhouette: Silent Scope 2 (Gallery)	24200	Jorel Chisolm	Winnipeg, MB, Canada	10-Nov-05
Datsun 280 Zzzap	4.51	Kevin Olkowski	Havelock, NC	17-Mar-82
Defender (Marathon)	79,976,975	Chris Hoffman	North Carolina	1-Jan-84
Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp	1006	Greg Sakundiak	Saskatoon, SK, Can	25-Feb-07
Galaga '88	1,575,490	Stephen Krogman	Boca Raton, FL	12-Feb-89
Galaxian 3	15,410	Alan Ngo	California	29-Aug-98
Ghosts'n Goblins	811,000	Steve Donaldson	Chico, CA	7/9/1999
Granny and the Gators	48990	Antoine Rossignol	Allentown, PA	2-May-98
Guerilla War	1,198,600	Martin Bedard	St Lazare, PQ, Canada	19-Nov-06
Hard Drivin'	219,758	David Nelson	Derry, NH	13-May-06
Hydro Thunder (Far East)	1:25.180	Shane Durette	Las Vegas, NV	20-Apr-99
Joust 2 (Marathon)	13,012,450	Robert Griffin	Kirkland, WA	2-Jun-06
Juno First (Marathon)	78,888,980	Tom Gibson	Dartmouth, NS, Canada	27-May-84
King & Balloon	48,960	Kevin Olkowski	Havelock, NC	10-Aug-82
Lazarian	382,785	Jason Cram	W. Lebanon, ME	29-May-06

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THE LAST WORD

by Kevin Steele

Try Before You Buy

As I mentioned in last month's column, arcade games aren't cheap. Even if the machine itself is inexpensive, there is the "cost" of finding the game, hauling it home, and finding room for it in your game room. This is one type of entertainment that really requires a personal commitment, especially since the 300-600 pound gaming device you just hauled into the house and dragged down into the basement is only one game. What if you don't like the game? What if you get bored with it quickly?

Questions like those highlight the risk of home arcade gaming. To make the best use of your time (and muscles!) you really need to know ahead of time if a particular game is going to have long-term staying power, if it's something you find fun, and if it's worth your time in general to hunt it down and acquire it. Heck, even finding the game you want requires a committed effort, so you'd better be certain it's what you want before you even start the search.

Unfortunately, you can't always (if ever) just run down to the local arcade to "road test" a game before you buy it. First off, arcades are a dying breed, and second, even if you find an arcade, the odds of them having the exact game you're looking for are minuscule. The proverbial needle in a haystack is a better bet. While online resources such as eBay and Craig's List have greatly aided the collector in tracking down rare or prized games, odds are the game you're looking for won't be found locally, which means you'll still have to pay to have it shipped to you, and that there will be no chance to play the game before it's delivered to your house.

So, what to do? With no games nearby to play, how do you try out arcade games, be it pinball or video games, and find one that has that magical element of "fun?" How do you ensure that the game you're buying is one that is worth the effort of acquiring? Well, I've found one method that doesn't even require me to leave the comfort of my office chair. Just what is my magic "try before your buy" solution? Computer Emulation.

I suspect that most of you have heard

of emulators such as MAME, Daphne, and Visual Pinball. I'm also fairly certain that many of you have tried an emulator or two. While many in the coin-op collector community look down upon emulation with disdain, I've got to tell you that emulators can be a very powerful and useful tool for the collector.

How? Simple—emulators, while not perfect, do provide you with a reasonably good representation of a particular game. They allow you to explore a game's rules, experience the sounds and sights, and even get a feel for the actual game play. All of these elements can allow you to narrow down your search for that "perfect game," and there's nothing quite like having several hundred (in the case of Visual Pinball) or several thousand (in the case of MAME) games to try out and evaluate.

Now, I'll be the first to admit that emulation is not always a substitute for the real thing. In fact, in the case of pinball, that's pretty much a given—having played the new "Ultrapin" pinball emulator from GlobalVR, I can safely say that it's the best video pinball game I've ever played...but it's not a replacement for real pinball games. Pinball is just not an easy game to reproduce accurately in virtual form.

Video games are a bit easier to reproduce accurately, but even then there are always factors that are going to prevent the reproduction from being 100% faithful to the original game. Whether it's the graphics, or the controls, or the sound, something about the emulated game will always be "not quite perfect." For many, it will be "good enough," but for the collector, "good enough" just never quite is.

Still, in both cases, all that a collector is looking for from an emulator is a "taste" of a particular game. In the case of virtual pinball, you can sample the game's rule set, see the



sounds and light show, and hopefully get a feeling for how much potential the game has for being fun. In the case of video games, you can delve even deeper, getting a "95%" experience of what a particular game has to offer.

Using emulators to "narrow the field" can greatly decrease the chance of you buying a game that just sits there in your game room, unplayed and gathering dust because it's just not fun to you, but unsold because it's such a pain to have to try and get rid of it.

I actually used Virtual Pinball/PinMAME to try out all of the pinball machines that I've bought, and I actually bought two of my machines through eBay, having never played the real game. I'm happy to say that the games I bought were just as fun in person as they were on the emulator. I have an "MAME cabinet" that I use to play arcade video games, but I'm still on the hunt for a nice Robotron:2084 game, because, as my favorite game of all time, I feel it deserves to be played on the original hardware.

Emulators aren't the enemy of coin-op collectors—in fact, in this twilight era of the arcade, they may be one of the collector's greatest buying tools, helping enthusiasts learn about (and perhaps buy) games that they never otherwise would have even known existed. It's ironic that reproducing games on modern computers may actually be helping to preserve interest in the physical arcade machines that may have otherwise simply been forgotten and thrown in the dumpster. Emulation is not here to bury arcade gaming, but to praise (and preserve) it. **GR**

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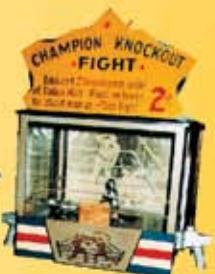
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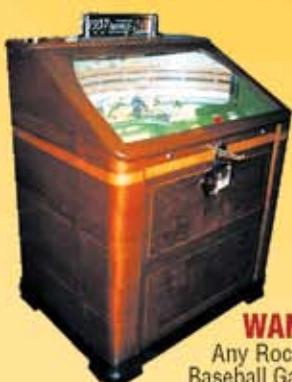
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