

# ATARI CONNECTION

ATARI INC., 1265 BORREGAS AVENUE SUNNYVALE, CALIFORNIA 94086

## College Union Show

Nearly 1000 delegates representing 450 colleges and universities attended the Association of College Unions' International Show held in Minneapolis, Minnesota on March 23rd - 26th.

ATARI SOCCER™ was a highlighted attraction at the show and, for most attendees, it was a preview introduction to the game. College delegates told Atari representatives that this game will be successful at campuses due to the high popularity of the sport nationwide. With Atari's reps coaching, show attendees intensely developed game strategy and were soon challenging others to compete on ATARI SOCCER.

ASTEROIDS™ was also a favorite, and campus delegates reported record high earnings from campuses across the country. ATARI FOOTBALL™ and BASEBALL™ were also exhibited at the show. Those who had never seen or played these games were enthusiastic about how realistically the games simulate space adventure and sports action. Those who were familiar with ASTEROIDS, ATARI FOOTBALL, and BASEBALL emphasized their satisfaction with these products.



## The Cabaret Concept

Atari has just introduced a revolutionary new cabinet design concept named "The Cabaret". A product of extensive human factors engineering and market research, the Cabaret cabinet is specifically designed to help open new types of locations and expand player/profit potential.

The Cabaret's advanced contemporary styling and compact size is an ideal solution for use in a variety of more sophisticated environments and for locations where space is very limited. Features include:

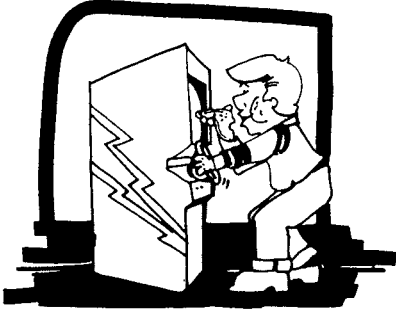
- Space-saving design (occupies only four square feet of floor space).
- Rich wood grain side panels.
- Illuminated attraction panels.
- Less weight for easy mobility.
- Standard two mech coin door.
- Shielded monitor to eliminate glare.

Asteroids™ is the first Atari hit available in the new cabinet design. Future games with proven popularity in standard configurations will also be offered in the new Cabaret model.

Asteroids Cabaret will be available from Atari distributors in limited quantities domestically and in larger quantities for European distribution in June.



## Players

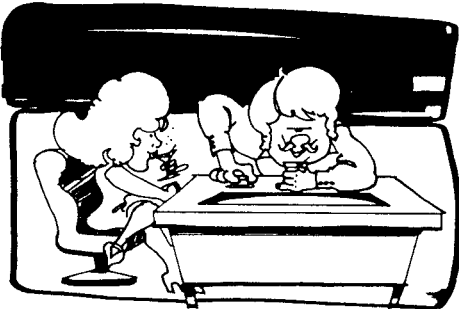


### WHO ARE YOUR PLAYERS?

Think about it. Each location caters to a slightly different clientele with respect to the players' motivations, interests, and expenditures. But who is really playing games? Do you see any changes in the players?

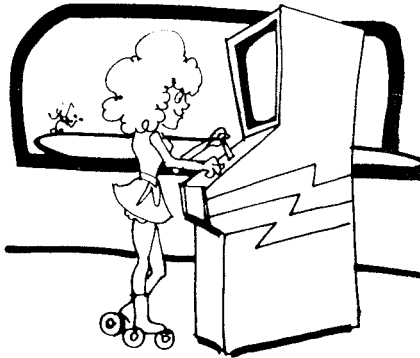
As you're thinking about your locations and perhaps what your players look or act like, consider these factors...

- The baby boom is over. Players are getting older. The growth of the 18-24 years group is slowing sharply and by the 1980's will be declining steadily. The fast growing segment will be the 25-44 years group.
- Young players, nurtured on coin-op games in game centers, will now be entering other types of locations



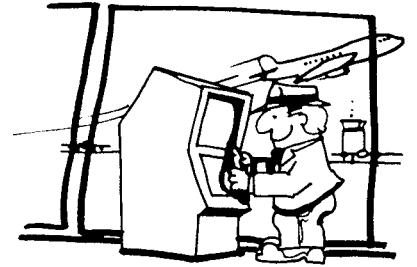
(bars, taverns, restaurants, etc.). They are bringing with them their awareness of games and their game preferences.

- A recent study\* of game center players revealed that as a player gets older, his level of preference for different game types (pinball, video, table hockey, foosball, shooting, skeeball) changes. Each of the age groups between 13 and 30 showed a high level of preference for pinball, but as the player gets older his preference for video increases. The player over 21 years old, while still



expressing a high level of preference for pinball expressed an even higher level of preference for video.

- Electronic toys and games is the fastest growing sector of the toy industry. People of all ages are demanding electronic entertainment. Electronic technology in games has reached out to consumers in different behavior modes — outside the home via coin-operated games, in the home via home electronic games and in the hand via the portable hand-held games. The result has been a dramatic increase in

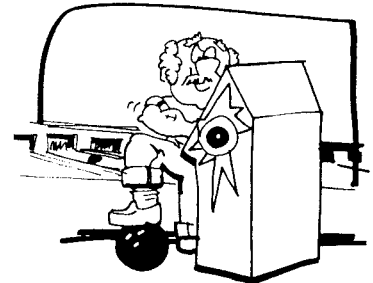


awareness of game technology, and increased awareness means more players.

- Changing lifestyles, two income families, more females in the work force, inflation, and the cost of fuel all impact consumer behavior. Inexpensive leisure activities have been growing at an unprecedented rate as people seek out convenient forms of entertainment to complement their lifestyles.

Think about your players. The name of your game is to collect full cashboxes. The best way to fill cashboxes is to meet the customers demands — learn about your players' profile and offer them the mix of games that maximize on their preferences and demands.

\*Game Center Study, March 1979, C. Well



## Help Your Organizations Help You

Ours is a fast-moving, changing industry. As an operator, you already know how competitive it is. You also know that any help you can get keeps you that much further ahead.

There is more help available than you may now be using to your full advantage... from your State and National industry organizations. To get the type of support you need, you have to support them. Their level of effectiveness is directly related to the people who make up their memberships. That's right. Busy people just like you who are constantly trying to improve and advance our industry.

At last count, AMOA can boast of no more than 12-15% of U.S.A. operators as members. In Wisconsin and Illinois and other state associations, the support is only 20%.

A free play bill was recently passed in Wisconsin and its passage was astonishing when you consider how few of the operators worked on it.

Restrictive legislation is being introduced in communities large and small all over the country. For example, on December 30th, without any notice or hearings, an ordinance was passed in Park Ridge, Illinois, limiting the operation of games to one unit per 2000 square feet of floor space.

And the AMOA is engaged in a bitter battle with ASCAP-BMI to prevent the escalation of the \$8.00 per jukebox levy.

These are just a few examples. As a manufacturer, we participate in legislation and legal proceedings. But you can help yourself most by our own participation. The most effective way to do this is through your local association and AMOA. You can't afford not to.

Take another look. Why not join today?

—an excerpt from a letter to operators from Joe Robbins, Empire Distributing Co.

## Asteroids™ Champ

In the last issue of the Coin Connection, we reported a high score on ASTEROIDS™ of 1,000,000 points. Well, records were meant to be broken, as the saying goes!

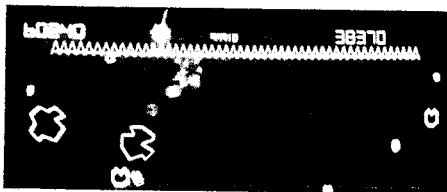
Duncan Brown of Charlottesville, Virginia, broke that record on March 29. Duncan reported that he played one game of ASTEROIDS for fifteen and one-half hours, scoring 7,200,620 points. When he quit playing, there were still twenty-two extra ships left.

Duncan has been playing ASTEROIDS since January at Noel's Sub Shop and Game Room near the University of Virginia. Before his record-breaking game, Duncan had spent a lot of hard-earned money learning how to play ASTEROIDS.

Duncan's ASTEROIDS technique is much the same as other expert players have reported. He leaves a couple of small asteroids on the screen so that the larger ones do not appear. He then places his space-

ship on the side of the screen and waits for the enemy saucer to come out. The player has a distinct advantage over the enemy saucer because the saucer is usually not as aggressive as the player.

An ASTEROIDS game modification is now available to help cut down on excessive player game times. (See related articles in this issue.) This modification will make the enemy saucer more aggressive.



Do you see this happening in your locations? This picture was taken recently at the Mountain View Time Zone near Atari. Eric Ginner and his friend, Samir Mehta, achieved a score of over 2,000,000 points after playing more than two and one-half hours.

## Service Specials

WHAT YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR! ATARI Asteroids t-shirts are now available for purchase from your ATARI Distributor.

These navy blue t-shirts are available in small, medium, large and extra-large sizes. They will make great location prizes, giveaways, and advertising premiums. Supply is limited so place your orders now!!

### REMINDER

As stated in the April issue of Coin Connection, with summer on the way, now is the time to recondition your "seasonal" games. We have main plexiglass available for such games as Drag Race, Breakout, Sky Diver and all the Triple Hunt games. Contact your ATARI Distributor to place your orders.

## Atari Brings Home the Blue

Atari jumping fences and winning ribbons? Sounds unlikely? Not exactly... Meet J.T. Perry of Los Gatos, CA, and her "junior jumper" Atari Superstar. Together they walked away from the Indian Hills Schooling Show in March with 2 first, 2 second and one fifth place ribbons.

J.T. has always enjoyed riding horses, beginning with her first pony ride when she was six years old. Now, at age sixteen, J.T. is an accomplished equestrienne. She purchased her 4-year-old registered thoroughbred last November and decided to name him Atari Superstar. "I had played a lot of Atari games and always thought they were the best. I wanted a strong, positive name for my horse and liked the sound of Atari Superstar, or just Atari for short," she explained.

J.T. enters about 24 shows a year and is presently training for the Pacific Horse Center "Spring Classic" to be held April 18-20. Atari, Inc. wishes J.T. and Atari Superstar the best of luck!



## Promotions for Profits

### ASTEROIDS TOURNAMENT

Tournaments are a great way to increase your location revenue. Tournaments not only add dollars to the cashboxes of the featured games, but add revenue to other games in the location as well. Player enthusiasm is sure to increase goodwill toward your business.

As an example, during February and March, Music-Vend Distributing sponsored an ASTEROIDS™ tournament at Goldie's and the New Century Tavern in Seattle, Washington. Four ASTEROIDS games in Goldie's and three ASTEROIDS games in the New Century Tavern were used for the tournament. Over a six week period, one color television was given away bi-weekly to the player with the highest score.

This promotion was so profitable that the operator and the locations have decided to continue the contest. \$50 cash prizes will be given away each week through the summer to the highest scoring player. The highest score recorded to date is approximately 135,000 points.

### TECHNICAL TIP

## Asteroids Modification

As a result of inquiries regarding the achievement of extremely high scores on Asteroids, we have developed a modification that will accomplish the following:

When the small flying saucer enters the screen, it fires immediately in the direction of the player. The missiles also have a wraparound capability.

Originally, the program was entered so that the saucer would go one-sixth of the way across the screen before firing, without wraparound capability.

There are two revisions currently in the field. ROM revision 02 has the flip-flop capability, version 01 does not.

Kits are available immediately from your Atari distributor. To determine which kit you require, check ROMs on your Asteroids PCB. If ROM code is "01", order kit no. 08-0303009. If ROM code is "02", order no. 08-0303008.

## Operators of the Eighties

### May Profile: Ralph Winfield - Burnaby, B.C., Canada

This month's Operators of the Eighties introduces Ralph Winfield of Ralph Automatic Coin Machine, Ltd. With 15 years in the business, Ralph's company is highly established and one of the largest in Canada, operating over 1000 pieces. The company's route operates within a 200 mile radius of Burnaby in addition to a "country" route 900 miles away. Ralph Automatic operates in almost every kind of street location and also supplies equipment for a chain of seven arcades.

#### UNDERSTANDING THE CANADIAN MARKET

Ralph's business philosophies evidence a thorough evaluation of the marketplace. He emphasizes several variables which differentiate the Canadian market from that of the U.S.

- The size of the Canadian population is significantly less than that of the U.S. and also more sparsely populated. As a result, he has a vast territory to cover and his travel costs are high. To minimize equipment downtime, his staff is technically qualified to implement on-the-spot repairs.
- Equipment costs are 40% higher due to Canadian duties and tariffs. Labor costs are also higher in Canada. To recover his high overhead and extreme costs, it is essential to maximize returns by taking progressive steps in game pricing and split percentaging. Many of his games are priced at 50¢/play and he



utilizes the multiple coin options as well. Ralph also breaks away from the traditional U.S. split of 50-50 by initiating 60-40 splits with his locations.

- A conservative attitude toward coin games prevails in Canada. Pinball was legalized only three years ago and the public acceptance has been gradual. Ralph makes extensive efforts to stimulate awareness and interest in games. His locations are encouraged to initiate tie-in promotions and in most cases, he bears part of the cost.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS

With the many years of his experience, Ralph can attribute his successful business to several fac-

tors. "Of primary importance is the emphasis we place on service. By providing maximum service with the latest methods, we are selling the company as a whole, rather than just a product," Ralph stated.

He further stresses the importance of flexibility. "Throughout the years, opportunistic operators were the ones who adapted to changing trends with an open mind. The biggest change I've seen is the transition to highly professional operating procedures, particularly in terms of bookkeeping methods," he noted. Ralph's company now utilizes computerized accounting records to monitor and document average earnings, down-time, pricing, and other factors that assist in financial assessments.

#### FUTURE OUTLOOK

In response to the upcoming trends he foresees, Ralph commented, "The industry is beginning to turn towards a volume business in order to become more lucrative and to justify the rising costs of operating and the loss of the quarter's buying power." In the meantime, Ralph Automatic Coin Machine, Ltd. will continue to seek untouched locations with hopes of expanding the player base.

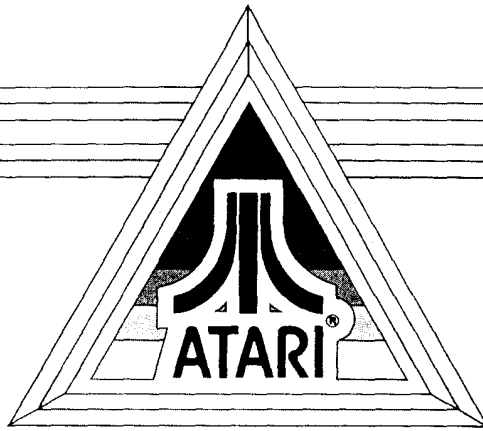
Atari commends Ralph Winfield for his progressive approach in the coin-op business. His ability to assess the marketplace and adapt according to current and foreseen changes is sure to result in his continued success.

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## How to Increase your Missile Command™ Earnings

What is the high score on your Missile Command game? 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 points? That's too low! Your players are probably not getting their money's worth, and that means you aren't getting enough quarters in the cashbox.

After three or four weeks of practice, an average player's score on Missile Command should be about 30,000 points; an excellent player should be able to achieve over 100,000 points.

A score of 146,000 has been reported by a local arcade after Missile Command has been in the location for only two weeks. After many months of practice, only a few Atari engineers are able to achieve scores of over 300,000 points! One engineer even scored 608,000! It proves that Missile Command remains a constant challenge. Even for very skilled players!

Not all players have the skill required to play a 300,000 point game of Missile Command. Your players may need some extra incentive to continue to develop their Missile Command skills.

Check the scores on your Missile Command game at the end of every day for a week. If Missile Command has been in

your location for at least three weeks, and your highest-scoring players are not achieving at least 30,000 to 40,000 points, the game options may be set too difficult for your location's clientele.

### **More options means more profits.**

Take advantage of the many operator-selectable options available on Missile Command. A bonus city can be awarded every 8,000 points (instead of the factory-set 10,000 points). This will give players a better chance of obtaining higher scores. As a player's score gets higher, Missile Command becomes more and more exciting. The challenge of the game increases as the colors of the attack waves change.

If scores get too high, and game times get too long, the operator-selectable options can then be set to be more difficult to maintain the challenge. The option can be set to award a bonus city at 10,000, 12,000, 14,000 up to 20,000 points. Or you can set Missile Command to start with as few as four cities or as many as seven.

Maximize your Missile Command longevity and profits by taking advantage of the options available.