

COIN CONNECTION

The ATARI® World Championships: Off and Running with the Centipede™ Stampede

The ATARI World Championships are only a little over a month away, and the qualifying tournaments going on right now are really hot. Over 500 ATARI \$50,000.00 World Championships Tournament Kits had been sent to operators around the U.S. by the second week in August. By the middle of September over 1100 Kits will have been distributed.

Included in the Kit are instructions on how to run a qualifying tournament consisting of five separate days or weeks of competition. 5 special Free Entry Certificates which entitle the holders to enter the World Championships in Chicago without paying the regular \$60.00 entry fee, and other information about the Tournament.

Now that Centipede has been chosen as the official game for the World Championship, players have really been lining up to play the game. There has already been a High Score logged in by ATARI's Marketing Services (see article in this issue of Coin Connection), so player enthusiasm is definitely there.

Operator enthusiasm for the competition is also strong. Bob Harvey, ATARI Coin-op Regional Sales Manager, and Lee Peppard of Tournament Games, Inc. have been traveling to various locations around the country where local tournaments are under way.



Laura Burgess and Linda Summers of Marketing Services pinpoint Tournament locations across the U.S.

They have reported that operators are extremely excited about the World Championships, that the response from their players has been so positive since word of the tournament has gone out that they can hardly get to the Centipede games to empty the cashboxes.

Mariann Layne, Manager of Marketing Services and ATARI's Tournament organizer, commented on the enthusiasm that the local tournaments have generated.

"We are very pleased with the response we've received so far from operators and players. The World Championships are the biggest event to occur in the coin-operated industry this year, and everyone seems to



Would-be Championships contestants throng Playland in Rye, New York, to compete on ATARI games.

be talking about it. Now that the local tournaments are under way, we are looking ahead to the finals in Chicago and making all the arrangements so that the Championships will run smoothly. With this much excitement built up already, the energy level at the finals should be really high."

It's not too late to run a local tournament. If you haven't ordered an ATARI \$50,000.00 World Championships Tournament Kit yet, there are still some available from Tournament Games, Inc. Just call them toll-free at 1-800-426-8897 (in Alaska, Hawaii, Washington or Canada, call 1-206-763-1362). Make sure to allow enough time to run five separate competitions.

Centipede™ First UL-Approved Video Game

Underwriters Laboratories Inc. has given its seal of approval to ATARI's Centipede coin-operated video game in the upright cabinet version. UL approval means that the game complies with most local government regulations.

There are two steps that a manufacturer must go through before a product receives UL approval. First, a prototype of the product is submitted to UL for

them to check. If it meets their requirements in the category under which it would be sold, then it is "listed" by UL.

After the product has been listed, then it must be produced according to UL prescribed standards. ATARI received final approval and began applying the UL certification stickers on July 10, 1981.

UL approval guarantees

to the operator of an ATARI Centipede Upright that the game is certified against shock or fire hazard, that the tempered glass on the game will not shatter, and that there are no inherent safety problems in the design or manufacture of the game.

ATARI is the first video game manufacturer to produce a UL approved



Sensational Centipede™ Now in Cocktail Cabinet



ATARI's super new Centipede video game is now available in a 14" cocktail version.

Centipede is an incredibly fast-moving game where lethal centipedes attack the player's position at the bottom of the screen. The player must try to destroy the rapidly approaching centipede by shooting its head with his bug blaster gun. Other pests against which the player must defend himself are mushroom-dropping fleas, hopping spiders, and the poisonous scorpion, which poisons mushrooms and any centipede that it comes into contact with.

The cocktail version of this successful game includes special ATARI features like a 14" color raster monitor, ATARI Trak-Ball™ control, continuous fire button, special coin door and

separate locking cashbox, and telescopic legs that allow the operator to adjust the game from sit-down to standup height, depending on the location traffic.

Frank Ballouz, ATARI's Vice President of Marketing for the Coin Operated Games Division, commented: "Now that Centipede has been selected as the official game of the ATARI \$50,000.00 World Championships, demand for the game has really increased. This versatile cocktail cabinet version allows operators to adjust the height of the game for maximum benefit and player availability."

Join the Centipede Stampede!

volume controls on the games. Installing the headphones is simply a matter of adding a jack or hardwiring the phones to the presently enclosed speakers. And the result is great for everyone. The players can adjust the volume of the game to suit their own tastes, and the store employees don't hear a thing.

We're always looking for great suggestions like this. If you have an idea for "Promotion for Profit", please send it to The Editor, Coin Connection, 1265 Borregas Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086. If we use your idea, we'll mail you a free gift.

ATARI Pursuing Copyright Infringers

Recently, the General Computer Corporation of Boston received a restraining order from Judge Robert E. Keeton of the U.S. District Court, District of Massachusetts, to temporarily prevent them from manufacturing, advertising or selling "Super Missile Attack", their product designed to "enhance" the game play on Missile Command™. The restraining order was granted in conjunction with a suit that ATARI has filed to protect their copyrights and trademarks on the Missile Command video game. The suit asks for punitive and exemplary damages from General Computer Corporation and its two principals. It also asks for all profits from the sale of the product.

This is a good example of the

ATARI policy of pursuing and prosecuting anyone who infringes ATARI trademarks and copyrights. Advertisements have been placed in all the trade journals letting people know that we are serious in our efforts to protect our copyrights on graphics, computer programs and audiovisual work on our video games.

Meanwhile, on August 25 the court began hearing ATARI's suit against General Computer Corporation. At that time, ATARI requested that a preliminary injunction be granted against General Computer Corporation, preventing the manufacture or sale of any more of its kits.

Watch for more news of this case. It is an important one for everyone in the coin-operated games business.

Positive Publicity: Space is the Place for Lunar Lander™

Each month in the Coin Connection, we will try to print a recent news item pointing out the benefits of coin-operated games. We feel this is particularly important at this time since many communities are trying to restrict the operation of games.

The Alabama Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville has found a new use for the ATARI Lunar Lander™ video game. A mockup of the Apollo lunar module cabin has been constructed around a Lunar Lander game, and visitors are encouraged to try to land the simulated craft without crashing or landing in a crater. To make the experience as close to the real one as possible, additional knobs and control panels surround the player in the capsule.

This is just one example of how a video game can be used for education as well as entertainment. The Alabama Space



and Rocket Center expects to have over 500,000 visitors a year by the mid-1980's; that means that a lot of people will benefit from the game's presence there.

Promotion for Profit

The promotion idea for this month's Coin Connection was once again submitted by Ian Bulloch at Game Town U.S.A. in Oakland, California. Mr. Bulloch has a great idea for those operators who have games in convenience stores.

He tells us that he has had games in a convenience store for three years, and the biggest problem has been the noise generated by the games. Oftentimes, games were actually unplugged just so that the store employees could have a bit of peace and quiet. To resolve this problem, Bulloch installed head sets with

Centipede UL Approved *continued*

product. Currently, the Cabaret™ and cocktail versions of Centipede are being considered for approval by UL, and we expect to receive final approval very soon. ATARI also plans to submit all new games for UL approval in the future.

Frank Ballouz, Vice President of Marketing for the Coin Operated Games Division of ATARI, said: "ATARI has always

considered the manufacture of consumer-safe products one of its top priorities. We submitted Centipede for UL approval because UL is an independent, third party organization with a reputation the consumer can count on. This is a guarantee of quality for operators and players alike, and we hope that our effort will set a standard for the rest of the industry."



Official ATARI High Scorers

as of August 25, 1981

Game	Player's Name	# of Points	Date and Time	Location
Asteroids™	Jay Howell 18 years	25,932,800	8/16-8/18/81 54 hrs., 7 min.	Jiffy Food Store Monterey, CA
Missile Command™	George Pimms	51,952,110	7/18-7/19/81 28 hrs., 7 min.	Bumpers, Inc. Spokane, WA
Battlezone™	Andy Eddy 23 years	4,053,000	6/29/81 4 hrs., 30 min.	Torrington Parkade Torrington, CN
Asteroids Deluxe™	Samir Mehta 15 years	269,000	6/1/81 40 min.	Time Zone Mountain View, CA
Centipede™	Samir Mehta 15 years	338,000	8/10/81 30 min.	Time Zone Mountain View, CA

ATARI Attends "C" Store Convention

What's small, open long hours, features limited brands and sizes and is a perfect market for video games? The Convenience Stores of America are the latest hot spots for ATARI coin-operated games. 71% of amusement game players are males between the ages of 12 and 25 years old; most frequent "C" store customers are males between the ages of 12 and 21. The market is surprisingly similar.

This fact as well as many others will be discussed at this year's National Association of Convenience Stores annual meeting at the MGM Grand Hotel in Reno, Nevada on October 4-8. The Marketing Services department at ATARI has put together a unique promotion and resource packet to be presented at the NACS meeting which specifically targets the convenience store market, pointing out that per square foot, video games can be an extremely profitable item. Over 800 corporate retailer member companies will be introduced to the advantages of ATARI video games in their stores.



Recent ATARI ad appearing in "Convenience Store News".

Over 2,000 people are expected to attend this year's NACS meeting. NACS serves as a resource and spokesperson for over 800 retail member companies and more than 32,000 retail stores in an industry whose annual sales exceed \$18 billion in food and gasoline and account for approximately 6% of total retail food sales. ATARI currently advertises in "Convenience Store News" and "C-Store Business", and will be sending representatives from Sales, Marketing Services and Field Service to the upcoming meeting.

Did You Know?

One of the reasons why many people enjoy coin-operated games is that they offer a type of social activity and environment that is vital for leisure entertainment. People tell us that a well-maintained location with clean and reliable games is treated with greater respect and invites less abusive behavior.

Industry News

Joe Robbins, President of the Amusement Devices Manufacturers' Association, has suggested that the ADMA offices be used as a focal point for coordinating letters and calls from people in the industry who are having legal problems regarding games. Anyone who is facing anti-amusement legislation should call the ADMA offices at 312-558-5229.

TECHNICAL TIPS

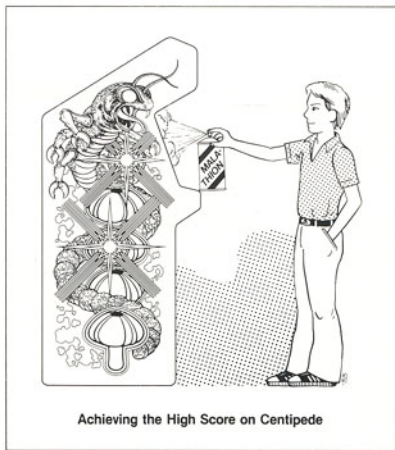
Missile Command™ and Centipede™ Color Monitors

The combination of a black screen and high B+ voltage is often diagnosed as a defective B+ regulator. However, all color monitors used in Missile Command™ and Centipede™ contain a high voltage limiter circuit (HVL) which, when activated, will disable the monitor. Under this condition minimum current is being drawn from the B+ regulator and regulation ceases. B+ will now rise to the same level as the unregulated voltage.

Besides a defective regulator, the following defective circuits will also cause the HVL to activate:

1. HVL components
2. Horizontal oscillator inoperative
3. Horizontal driver inoperative
4. Horizontal output inoperative

Do not defeat the HVL circuit. Its purpose is to insure that the high voltage will not increase to the point where soft X-rays are generated by the CRT.



Achieving the High Score on Centipede

Operator of the '80s: Stephen Goot, Atlanta, Georgia

Stephen Goot entered the coin-operated games business about seven years ago when he recognized a need for a source of inexpensive entertainment in the hotels that he supplied with audio-visual equipment. (Total Audio Visual Services is primarily a business which rents projectors, screens and other visual aids for trade shows, conventions, and other meetings.) He began his game route with 26 Pong® games, which he installed in hotels and local bowling centers. He still has five of his original accounts.

What makes Stephen Goot unconventional is the way he operates his game route. He's a success story on how to run a business your way by giving your customers what they want and out-doing your competitors.

Equipment Turnover

Probably the most unique aspect of the operation is the very fast rate of equipment turnover. Out of the 250 machines on about 40 stops, Stephen purchases 160 to 180 new games each year. He buys at least one unit of just about every game that is introduced to the market. Every 12 months he turns over about two-thirds of his inventory. In this way Stephen supplies each of his locations with the best current games and keeps a constant turnover of equipment.

Preferring to sell games before they lose their trade-in value, Stephen sells a lot of his inventory to other operators who have been referred to him by distributors. He also maintains a mailing list of 100 to 150 operators in the Southeastern United States, to which he mails news-



The TAV service team, ready for action.

letters every six to eight weeks to advertise specials.

"Every piece on my route is for sale at anytime," Stephen told us, "but I do like to keep a minimum of each of the top pieces at all times."

Stephen also sells coin-operated games to the home market. Most of this equipment is sold during a large sale he holds twice a year. The game sale is advertised to consumers in the sports section of the newspaper.

Contracts

Stephen insists on having a signed contract with each of his locations. Most of his contracts are for from three to five years. With seven days notice he can cancel any contract, for any reason; the location has no option to cancel. He does not allow the location to demand specific pieces of equipment; he alone decides on the games to install; however, Stephen's locations are guaranteed an increase in revenues generated each time he rotates equipment.

The same basic contract is

used for all locations. Some sites are on a graduated commission based on the average take per machine per week. For instance, the location may get only 45% of the take if the average is \$80 per machine for a particular week. If the average weekly earnings per game were higher, the location would get a larger percentage of the take.

Service

The servicing of equipment is also done on terms to suit the best interests of Stephen's company. Unlike many other operators, Stephen's servicemen do not make calls after 7:00 p.m. If, however, a location reports a problem by 5:00, the game will be repaired that day.

"It's just not economical to have a 24-hour repair service", Stephen reported. "The games don't make enough money to cover the expense of having that kind of service. We guarantee repairs within two hours after we are notified of a problem. If a call comes in after 5:00, the game is repaired the first thing

the next morning."

Total Audio Visual is prepared for on site repairs on almost any potential technical failure in the field. Each of his three repair trucks are designed to be full-line service centers, carrying everything from pinball playfield glass to monitors, and all sorts of video and pinball replacement parts. From these vehicles the servicemen can repair 90% of all mechanical and electrical failures in the field.

New Locations

During the past year Stephen's dollar volume has nearly doubled due to the addition of better accounts. Stephen also added six new locations to his route last year; these locations had never had games before.

Very soon Stephen will be opening three arcades in the Atlanta area. The new game centers will be called "Tokens", and will be run as a separate division of his route operation. Stephen has made extensive leaseholder improvements which he feels will increase the traffic in the new game centers.

For the grand opening of the arcades the customers will receive eight tokens for a dollar, and other merchants in the area will give away coupons for a free game with purchases made in their stores. Stephen will ask players to sign up for membership cards which will entitle the bearer to one free play per day. He will also start a birthday club that gives the registered player ten free games on his birthday. Stephen will use the membership cards and birthday club to develop a mailing list of players to advertise special promotions.

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