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Pinball addicts get 2-bit thrills

(from pg. 1)

tally isolated from everything except the machine. They swear, groan, even smile at the machine.

And when they beat a tough machine, they tell you the victory feels as real and solid as the machine itself.

What makes a good pinball player? They all have their own approaches and styles. Gary said he is good because he has flipper control.

"They (the flippers) can do more than just hit the ball back into the playfield," he said.

He said he can catch the ball with a raised flipper and hold it still. He can then aim the ball to hit the target of his choice.

A skilled player can also influence

the ball's path by nudging the table. Harvey says he can make the ball go through any track he wants and can keep the ball from exiting down the sides.

Moving the table too much or too violently can cause the table to tilt and cancel the ball in play. But the skilled player knows how to move the table around without tilting it.

"I sometimes move the table across the room," Harvey said. "People who don't know the machine could shove it once and tilt it."

"The tilt is necessary to keep the machine competitive," said Richard Bennings, manager of Dudley's Draw. "If it never tilted, the skilled

"When the machine never gives me a chance to hit the ball, I'll give it one big, swift shove to tilt it."

player would win too much and challenge would be gone."

Bill says he uses the tilt to take out his frustrations when he is losing.

"When the machine never gives me a chance to hit the ball, I'll give it one big, swift shove to tilt it," he said. "I guess I think I get back at the machine. It makes me feel better anyway."

Harry Williams, owner of William Electronics from 1929 until 1960, in-

vented the tilt mechanism and the kickout hole. He is also credited with making the machine 'talk' with bells and gongs. William Electronics is one of the three largest pinball companies in the world.

Underneath the machine a peg rests inside a ring. The machine tilts whenever the peg hits the ring. But Williams isn't entirely satisfied with this invention.

"Sometimes I rue the day I did it," he said in an interview with the New York Times Magazine. "The tilt has made us a lot of enemies."

Pinball has been legal in Texas since 1933. But it is illegal in a few other states.

The legal problem is because pinball has always been associated with gambling. At one time pinball did pay off a nickel for a good game.

In Texas the law requires a pinball machine to be licensed once a year. There is a \$15 state fee and a \$7.50 city fee.

The law also requires a 50-50 earnings split between the owner of the machine and the owner of the establishment where the machine is operated. The vendor provides the machine and its upkeep, while location is provided by its owner.

The vendor is on call seven days a week. If a profitable machine breaks down in the evening, the vendor will come fix it so it will not lose money.

"A popular machine in a popular location can take in a maximum of \$100 a week," Ischner said. But on an average, he said they make between \$30 and \$50 a week from each machine.

The backflash (area on the machine where the score is shown) seems to be an influence on how much the game is played. After Elton John played the pinball wizard in "Tommy," Bally named a game after him called Captain Fantastic. It

featured Elton John on the backflash and it became the biggest selling machine in the company's history.

Ischner said the "Evil Kniefel" machine was popular until Evil Kniefel was arrested on assault

"A popular machine in a popular location can take in a maximum of \$100 a week."

charges. After that the sales started dropping, he said.

Liz Hughes, secretary for F&F Vending Co. said that the "Night Rider" machine was popular with truck drivers. Its backflash features truckers and waitresses and the machine can usually be found in any truck stop.

Jeremy, a 4-year-old pinball freak,

says he likes to play because of the lights and the noise the machine makes. He sits on a bar stool and flips the flippers any time the ball gets near them. He says he is learning to aim the ball now and can win games.

Pinball addiction seems to be booming in the College Station area.

The electronic machines are usually full and people play for hours at a time.

If you want to get on a machine these days you have to put your finger up and wait until the other player runs out of games. This may sound discouraging if you are waiting behind a pinball wizard. But most electronic machines have a limit of free games at one time.

If a quarter has been put up and you are playing, you must give the machine after all the games have been played. But people get around this by putting a dozen quarters on the table when they start playing.

Pinball addicts don't feel they are wasting money. Thirty pinball addicts were asked how much they spend on pinball per week. Most of them never spend more than \$5 a week, yet they play everyday.

"After you play for a while you feel good and don't have to spend much money," Dave said.

Bill said he can usually play a night for a quarter because he has so many games.

And what does Bill get for a quarter? A challenge for skill, a chance for aggression, a degree of faction and a chance to beat the machine.

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Aggie Players, "A Streetcar Named Desire," 8 p.m., Rudder Forum	TAMU's men's soccer, SMU vs. A&M, 2 p.m., soccer field north of Olsen baseball stadium	TAMU's men's soccer, UT vs. A&M, 2 p.m., soccer field north of Olsen baseball stadium
Aggie Cinema, "7 Percent Solution," 8 p.m., Rudder Theater and "Slapshot," 12 midnight, Rudder Auditorium	Aggie Players, "A Streetcar Named Desire," 8 p.m., Rudder Forum	Women's Leadership Workshop, 8 to 8 p.m., 205 MSC
Military Ball, 8 p.m., Exhibit Hall	Aggie Cinema, "7 Percent Solution," 8 p.m., Rudder Auditorium	Killeen Area Hometown Club, 7 p.m., 410 Rudder
Management Society, wine & cheese party, 8 p.m., Treehouse Apartments party room		Bahai Club Fireside, meditation & Faiths Chapel, 8 p.m.
		American Nuclear Society, general meeting, 7:30 p.m., 103 Zachry
		Wildlife Biology Association, special will be Clinton Spots from EP-7, 8 p.m., 113 BSC E

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OFFICIAL NOTICE
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ALL JUNIORS and SENIORS in curricula of the College of Science must take the English Proficiency Examination on **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 1978, at 7:30 p.m. No make-up exam will be given this spring.**

- BIOLOGY Department Curricula - ROOM 113 BSBE
- CHEMISTRY Department Curricula - ROOM 100 CHEM
- MATH Department Curricula - ROOM 101 MILNER
- PHYSICS Department Curricula - ROOM 301 PHYS

In order to qualify as a candidate for a degree in the College of Science, each student must demonstrate an ability to express himself (or herself) in acceptable English. This requirement may be satisfied by (1) passing an examination in English composition (EPE) taken not later than the spring semester of the junior year, or (2) completing English 301 with a minimum grade of "C".

ANY STUDENT WHO FAILS THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION (EPE) MUST SATISFY THE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT BY TAKING ENGLISH 301 AND EARNING A MINIMUM GRADE OF "C".

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