

Boy scores 14 million points

Pinball wizards now common

United Press International
Mark Manzo, 14, of East Eddington, Me., was just planning to sharpen his skills when he plunked his first quarter in the Asteroids machine one Sunday morning in early May.

He wrapped up the game 29 hours, 35 minutes and 14,232,200 points later.

"I'm dead tired," the youthful video shark said after relinquishing the controls. "It was just one quarter."

Manzo said he had seen a television show about a fellow who scored 14 million points in the game. He just wanted to beat his record for blasting apart rock fragments and spaceships with laser fire on a video screen.

"These machines pay the rent on the store every month," said Jack Weber, co-owner of a neighborhood bar on Chicago's North Side. When he and his partner took over their tavern the only form of entertainment, other than drinking, was a juke box.

Despite warnings from their chagrined regulars that the clientele would drastically change, Weber installed two game machines — a pinball and an Asteroids.

Now the old timers have become as adept at manipulating side flippers and dodging invaders from outer space as the newcomers who wander in off the street at the sight of the flashing lights.

"There's a guy named George, a grad student, who completely changed his drinking habits when he found out we had an Asteroids machine," Weber said. "He was walking by the bar one night and saw it so he came in."

Weber said neighborhood residents, including some kids brought by their parents, come to play. Others start at the bar and end up playing.

He said the games weave a spell of fascination around the players — enticing on two levels of competition.

"There is the person-to-person competition where the players bet dinner, drinks and money on who wins. Then there is competition against the machine itself."

Asteroids brings the bar about \$120 weekly, as does the pinball machine.

Weber said there is a problem with the video games. Players tend to lose interest after the game has been around for a while because they become familiar with all the nuances of the computer and master the game.

On the other hand, pinball players seem to maintain a constant interest in their game, regardless of the machine, because the game doesn't really change, just the caricature like figures and names of the games.

Weber said people frequently bet \$10, \$15 or \$20 — or more simply the bill for dinner — on a single game.

Paul Calimari, director of sales for Bally Mfg., the world's largest pinball manufacturer, said the games came into being during the Depression.

In 1931, Bally introduced the first mass produced pinball machine — "Ballyhoo" — its name derived from a show business magazine.

Over the next 15 to 20 years the game grew in popularity until it became a household word.

The debut of the Rock opera "Tommy" by The Who, with its featured song "Pinball Wizard," climbed to the top of the hit charts and carried the game with it in the early 1970s.

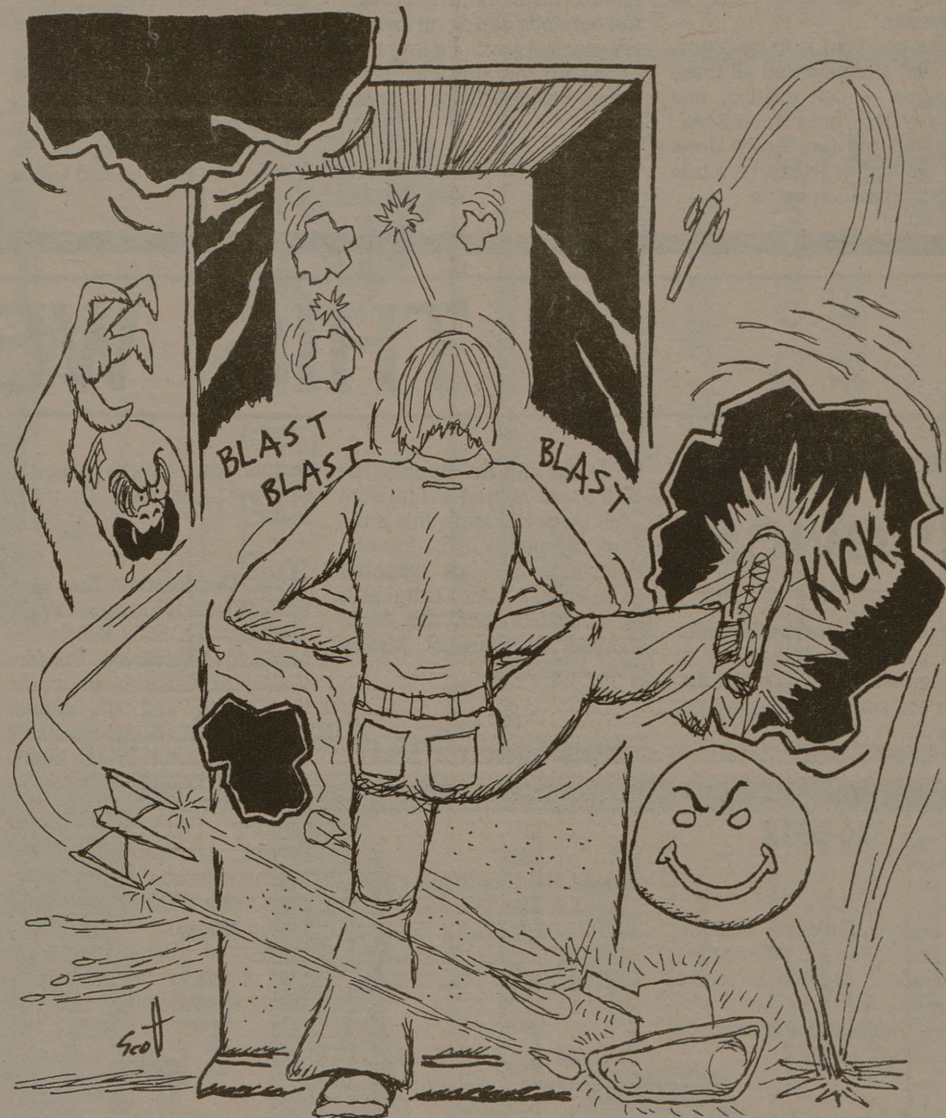
Family arcades and games parlors began springing up, especially in suburban shopping centers.

"We in this business are selling entertainment, cheap entertainment," Calimari said. "Many people can't afford tickets to a football game or a boxing match, but they can afford a quarter for a pinball machine."

"It's a wholesome way of entertaining oneself for a small amount of money."

Calimari said Bally manufactures between 100,000 and 120,000 pinball machines each year. The machines cost an estimated \$2,000 each and retail through distributors. Most of the games in home use are purchased as used commercial games. There is a model on sale designed for home use, but is of

inferior quality.



inferior quality.

In the fast-growing video game market, Midway Mfg. is the largest company in the world. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of Bally Mfg.

The phenomenal "Space Invaders" game was brought imported from Japan by Midway. In the past two years, Bally made and sold more than 60,000 Space Invaders machines for a net profit of about \$18 million.

The company manufactures about eight new games a year. One of the latest is "Pac Man" — a difficult-to-describe-unless-you've-played-it game set in a maze. Afficionados say it picks up where Space Invaders left off.

"Video has come on real strong into its own in the last couple of years," Calimari said. "The reason is the outer space themes. Asteroids appealed to younger people and really helped the video arcade business."

Video started out almost exclusively as an arcade game. The first game, "Pong," was made by Nolan Bushnell of Atari. "It took over like magic" and from that all other video games were derived, Calimari said.

"All types of coin operated amusement lend itself to the masses of people because it is a cheap form of entertainment," he said. "It offers people a little

bit of enjoyment to forget about their problems."

And, best of all for the manufacturers, Calimari said "the economy does not effect our business the way it does others."

"It was born during the depression and flourishes even when economy is bad because people need an escape," he said. "Being able to go to your local tavern or games parlor and playing pinball for a while — it's sort of like a well-to-do person going to Las Vegas."

"What we're selling is entertainment, we're in show business. The more entertainment we can provide the better off we are."

Wedding day saved by worker

By Aline Mosby

United Press International
LONDON — The unsung hero of the wedding ceremony uniting Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer was a hairy-chested youth in blue jeans, T-shirt and sneakers.

What the television cameras did not show inside 741-year-old St. Paul's Cathedral was that the workers struggled too long to lay the 652-foot red carpet from the outside steps to the altar because it was stiff and

cheap, in line with current austerity.

There was no time to pull off all of the plastic protective covering before the guests began pouring into the cathedral at 9 a.m.

At 10:15 a.m., the procession of supporting players in the pomp and ceremony had begun. The speaker of Parliament in his black velvet Little Lord Fauntroy trousers and the queen's yeomen in red and black Beefeater garb were para-

ding by the assembled foreign heads of state, diplomats, lesser royalty and the best of the rest in their feathered and flowered hats and gray top hats and morning coats.

Suddenly, four workers in jeans surged forward. One in a T-shirt labeled "Adidas" displaying some of his chest leaped to the dias where the bride and groom would be married and grabbed off the plastic covering.

He and his helpers hurried out of sight like "prop" boys

caught on a stage when the curtain went up. "The red carpet will be used for office buildings so there's no waste — these are perilous times in Britain," hissed one of the ushers.

I was one of only 12 American correspondents permitted inside the cathedral to view the wedding ceremony.

A heartstopping moment for us came after the bride and groom said "I will" and were to sit for the hymns and sermon. An attendant in black swallow

tail coat stepped forward to put a red brocaded silkstool with gilded legs underneath the new princess of Wales. Both Prince Charles and Diana yanked the sequined 25-foot ivory tulle train to one side. Then they fussed with engineering the full-skirted ivory taffeta skirt and numerous crinoline petticoats so she could sit.

For four agonizing seconds she hovered in space, her hands groping behind her. Would she sit in a void? She made it to the stool.