

RICH HUFF
Midwest Pinball – Oak Park, IL

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My name is Douglas Rubio I'm here with Midwest Pinball Restoration, today is November 9th and were going to start with questions. And I'm James Atkins

--James--

How long have you been in the industry?

15 years, I started in 2001.

And you've always been into pinball?

Nope...

No, what'd you do before that?

I did business consulting. Yeah, I in fact growing up I was actually more into arcade games, I didn't play pinball,

Ok, what got you into pinball?

There's a guy I used to work with in one of my jobs, and he had moved on into a different business, I moved on to a different business. And when we reconnected, he said, "What do you do?" And I said, "I do business consulting, what do you do?" He said, "I buy and sell pinball machines full time." "Whoa, that's pretty cool...You can make money at that?" He's like "Oh yeah." Uhm so I went over to his place to play a couple games, and he said "Well Rich, if you see anything you like let me know and I'll get one for you." I said, "Yeah, this seems kinda fun." Two weeks later he calls me up. He says, "Hey Rich, I got you Tales of Arabian Nights."

Nice

"Let's put it in your basement." I had been extensively hired by an Internet startup, but this was 2001 well the tail end of that. It wasn't going anywhere. So I really had pretty much four days a week with nothing to do.

OK

And I had complained to him that my game didn't look like his, and he said, "Well what doesn't work?" I says, "No, its not that its not working, it doesn't look like yours. Yours...shines!" He says, "Well Rich, yours is dirty. It's a reimport from Germany, they smoke like chimneys over there. Uh, here's the deal I got you the game you wanted, It works 100% and I sold it to you at me cost. So Id go over to his place every week learning to clean games so I could clean mine. And he said "You know I get people calling me asking for...service. And if they didn't get a game from me im not interested in servicing theirs. My business is buying and selling pinball machines." So I created Midwest Pinball to do service really. And it ran part time, I went back

into consulting by the end of the summer. It ran part time until about 2008, and then in 2008 the consulting business dried up so I switched it and made Midwest Pinball full time and did the consulting part time. And then that disappeared two years ago.

Ok, what would you say was the biggest turning point in the industry that you've seen so far?

That I've seen, that's uh, you know I've missed most of it. You know in the 70s and 80s realistically it was Jersey Jack pinball, coming onto the market.

And when did they come on?

Hmm, 2013, I think when they announced. Maybe 2012... In 1999 uhm Gary Stern bought back his dad's company and started Stern Pinball. He bought it from Sega, That was the same year that Williams bought Bally basically said we're out of the pinball business. We make slot machines, we make good money making slot machines. The only major manufacturer of pinball machines for over a decade. So from 99 pretty much through 2011 2012 when Jersey Jack came onto the market and said "we're gonna find our own titles and manufacture our own games." At you know for commercial use, some people had been manufacturing short runs, they'd do around 10 or something on the side out of their garage. This was somebody saying we are going to launch a major manufacturing industry out in Jersey, and we're competing with Stern.

Nice, what games do they make?

Their first title was Wizard of Oz, uhm it's a very big game has lots of features, has lots of toys. It was very expensive, but they basically said our market is, we're not trying to undercut Stern. We are going for the high end of the market. That's where we're gonna be. Now, since then there's probably a dozen companies developing machines. They are not all manufacturing them, but they're developing them. So Stern manufactures, or we could say assembles their games. Wizbang and Chicago Gaming Games all in their factory, because both of those organizations looked at what it cost to open up their own factory and said "Gosh, do we really wanna drop a couple million bucks and equipment. Made a deal with Stern said "Hey, you guys do the assembly, we ship you all the parts, you do the assembly, and you'll handle the distribution. " Which they do. Jersey Jack is a partnership with one of the old designers from Bally Williams, so I think their doing a similar deal. There's a manufacturer out of Wisconsin and one or two in Europe. They used to do three, then it was down to two then it was down to one. So significant growth in the pinball industry, the arcade side is stayed pretty steady, I don't do a lot with arcade, but uh, you know sega makes silent scope whatever the gun games are that you sit down and find in Gameworks, Gameworks is owned by Sega. So they manufactured the games they put them on their locations, the sell them out to other locations through their distributors, but they feed their own games by their locations.

I didn't know they were owned by Sega, that's interesting. ...

That's how the movie theaters used to work.

Really?

Yeah, guys who made the movies, you know the 20's to the 30's they made the moves. Paramount made the movies, owned the actors, if you were working for paramount you didn't work for anyone else. They owned the theater, they had the hole chain!

Nice, and we were talking about this offline, but it was, what made you get into the industry, do you want to go back over that. So can you give us an idea of the progression in the industry, your progression including any highs any lows?

Uhm.... Well I essentially started this business bootstrap. Which basically means without money, which is a hard way to do it. So it has been a very slow progression for the past 10 years, plus I wasn't doing it full time. We are only now getting to the point where I mean we've got, I mean I have got a good book of business, I have got a solid customer base. Im booking work now out into January.

Nice, do you have any, like with the beercades in the city...

I don't do any commercial work, I only do residential.

Are there any specific people that have influenced you, in this industry?

Id say that Pat Choi from Endless and then you'd have to admire Gary Stern for sticking with it. For him it was family and he bought the company back to keep the name on it, which was cool, and to keep pinball alive.

--Douglas--

What is your favorite game, personally, anything that gave you a deep personal connection or anything like that?

Well my favorite game growing up was Gauntlet. You play the Elf Wizard Barbarian. What was nice about it was that four people could play at once so if you went to the arcade with your friends, but you didn't need four players. So if you went to the arcade and you were there by yourself, you could start a game by yourself if someone else came along they could add their quarters in and jump in. You play up to four and if somebody dropped out you could just keep playing. So that was really big and liked to go to the arcade to play. In terms of pinball machines, I really think Tales of Arabian Nights is still my favorite. It's a very nice combination of artwork and sound and some decent ball flow.

I saw that on the website, and you had mentioned it. There was another on the website that you mentioned, Spiderman?

Spiderman, yeah, I still have both of them. Spiderman Black is a much newer game, Arabian Nights is from 95. That's a classic Williams title. Spiderman is from 2007, I think, that's a Stern title. It also has good ball flow. The colors are on it are very, its designed after a comic book character so its very comic book colors. Stern has done well with the comic book superhero titles, and rock bands.

Yeah I actually saw one for Metallica

They did AC/DC, They did Metallica, and they did KISS, which bally had done back in the late 70s. They next one on the list is Aerosmith at some point, rumors of other band titles too. Superhero side, they did Superman; they did Spiderman, Ironman, Avengers.

13:34

Why do you think that coin op has stayed so relevant all these years?

I don't know that it has....

Ok...

I mean its uhm...it was certainly big in the 70s and strong through the 80s and started to diminish in the 90s. Most of the arcades went away. And there have been a number of people that have posited of why that might have happened. There was a movie that came out several years ago called *Special When Lit*. It was a documentary on pinball. One of their conclusions was the home arcade. Kids didn't have to go anywhere to play a range of games, they could sit right in front of the TV and do it. So now what you're seeing is a resurgence of the arcade, but it's not for kids, its barcades, its for adults. The one exception to that in this area is Galloping Ghost, which is out in Brookfield, you pay one and you go all day if you want, but there is no alcohol its for kids. Even if you look at Gameworks, once its like 6 o clock, its based on the curfew Shamburg has, but once its like 6 o clock they serve alcohol and the deal with the village is, if we are gonna serve all the kids have to be gone. So it's really an adult oriented thing. And that's because all the adults with the money grew up I the 80s and 70s further back, its what they want to do. Certainly from in a pinball perspective its become more of a home market. And I would guess some respects that the arcade side if you look at gaming systems. Golden Tee, ahs transitioned form the arcades, which aren't around anymore, to the home. It was strong in bars, I'm sure it is still strong in bars. I see a lot of Golden Tees in homes; I see a lot of arcades games in homes.

14:40

If one is interested in the coin op industry, where should they start?

In a trade show. There's a number of very large trade shows that still run, probably about 10 or 12 every year. Throughout the US, one of the big ones is here in Chicago. Typically in Chicago, and there's another one that runs twice a year that is out in St. Charles, and that one is this weekend.

Oh nice!

So, we'll be there. Not a lot of pinball, it's a lot of jukeboxes slot machines, a couple of pinball vendors, there's some non coin op stuff like antique signs, some arcade, and some guys who do some really, very interesting coin op stuff. I think Chicago Coin used to make units that were little four person stands that were marionettes. The curtains would open up, the song starts up and the players are playing their instruments. It's big.

How do you think Chicago is different compared to other places in terms of coin op?

I think it comes down to the history. I mean if you go back to the 20s or 30s there was hundreds of pinball manufactures here in Chicago. It was a huge industry and I am sure that was a lot due to location, Chicago was a great place to start a business. So, we still live off that legacy, I mean I survive off that legacy. I get somewhere between 200 and 250 new customers every year. That's somebody who calls me up and says "I've got a game in my house, that needs service." And, very often I hear. "Well, my uncle used to work for Bally...." Not in their sales department, he was in their accounting department or something. And they'd have units left over and families could buy them. In general the way the pinball industry worked is they would run one title, once. And then they'd move on to whatever's next. So up until recently you wouldn't get a title, even if it was a popular title, made once and then a couple years later make it again. What they'd do is if it was a popular title they'd create a title that would be a sequel and that would become the latest and greatest, sound a lights or what not. So a lot of these old games are sitting in houses in Chicago.

What would you say the most common thing you restore in a machine, the part you have to fix, or is it always different?

It's usually different. If it comes down to it, it's the rubber bands they're dry rotted, if it's a newer game made after 78 it's got batteries in it. So, especially through the 80s and 90s as these games move through a residential environment people didn't realize they had batteries in them. And then all of a sudden their game stops working and it's because the batteries have died and are leaking acid into the CPU. So we try and do an announcement on our website and our blog and Facebook once every October, when they do the PSA about changing the batteries in your smoke detector, we say change the batteries in your pinball machine, if it's got them, modern games.

So they don't just run off AC, but they also have batteries?

They do run off AC, but what they have the batteries for is to save what are called non-factory settings. So, high-scores, free-play, mechanical games didn't save high scores, they saved nothing. So you could unplug it, move it around throw it in storage for 20 years, pull it back out, turn it back on, its all relays it doesn't have memory. In order to hold the data it needs the batteries, for some means to save the data.

What do you think goes into a good coin op game?

It really comes down to the gameplay. And there's a science to that, which I can appreciate, but don't understand. And Ill give you a couple examples. The first one people think of on a pinball perspective is on Adams Family. Adams family is a great game, whether you care about the characters or not. It's essentially the perfect storm of gameplay, features, sound/music, and artwork. It just works. Everything just works; it draws in people that have never played pinball before. Because its fun, its unpredictable, but not too unpredictable. Cus its got magnets under the playfield, it's a great game. The team that made that was the Bally team, after Williams had bought Bally. The design team, they had two design teams. Said ok here's your project. They did such a good job that Williams was like Awesome, we made more Adams Family pinball machines than any other machine ever made. And this is the designer saying its gonna be expensive, because you have to get a license from paramount, if you want Rod Sterling on there you have to get the license from his estate. It's a wide body, there's a lot of stuff going on. Williams, pretty much said fine, do whatever you want, we love you guys. And while today it's a very popular game in the home environment, from a commercial perspective it wasn't a big hit. Willaims was kind of confused; it did really well on this one and not on this one, "What's up?" This is from a talk the designer game, he said, "we made a pinball machine for pinball players, its big, its deep, and complicated. The typical guy in a bar putting his 50 cents in is going to get lost really quickly. Its not always called out what to do next, just doesn't know, he's not gonna put his money in again." Hence why its not gonna do well on location its not going to do well commercially. But you got it at home, you've got time to play on it and understand it. It's deep a complicated game; it's a lot of fun. There was a game I picked up for one point for resale. From a company called Game Plan, and Game Plan was around for a number of years they made some, I don't know how many titles they made, maybe 10 or 12. The game was really boring. And if you put it next to a Bally game from the same year, and just looked at it. You'd say, Game Plan game has two flippers, Bally game has two flippers, Game Plan game has three pop bumpers, Bally has bumpers, this one has drop targets, that has targets. This has standups, this one has standups. All the same stuff, why is it this one is no fun to play? That's where the science of gameplay exists. That's why I said don't understand it, I can recognize it. I just recognize this is a boring game. The guys who understand it do well. Roger Sharp, he is a pinball designer and from articles Ive read companies would call him in to tweak the design of games and he would come and he would look at the playfield and look at the playfield and say you need to take this switch that's worth 10000 points and move it over here. Because this shot is too easy to get. If you make this shot then the player feels they've earned that shot. Like I said I cant do it, but I appreciate it. That's what makes a game a great game. He is in the Chicago area, as are his sons so I would, if you're looking for interviews I would see if you can find him if you haven't already. He wrote a book in the 70s to the Supreme Court. There was a

disagreement whether pinball was gambling. So the city of New York said you couldn't have pinball machines in the city they're gambling devices. Gambling is regulated. And pinball manufacturers wanted to prove it wasn't. It went all the way up to the New York Supreme Court and they have a pinball game on the floor and had people basically from the jury ask him to make a shot. "Can you hit that?" and he could hit it, "Can you hit that?" and he could hit it. Proving it's a game of skill and not one of chance.

You mentioned the two games Adams Family and Twilight Zone. Which one is better in your opinion?

Between those two? I like Adams Family better. Uhm, Twilight zone is really big and complicated. Adams Family has a weird sense of humor to it that I enjoy.

In terms of pinball machine, you said gameplay is important. What do you like in terms of gameplay, what do you look for?

In general, you're looking for is a mix of shots. Ranges between mid and long-range shots. Its tough to design a short range shot because the flippers, if they're gonna drive the ball back here you're gonna have a real hard time getting it there. So if you start about mid playfield back, and provide a range of shots. A good example of that is Lord of the Rings. Lord of the Rings has essentially a shot map of seven shots that go as rays across the playfield. It's the Shire, there's back into the return lane, there's a shot towards the back and basically feed back into the lanes, there's a ramp that sometimes has a Belrog in front of it. There's the Golom hole, there's the other end of the loop and then there's the stand up targets. So you've got all those shots. Other games, games that have stuff too tight to the middle of the playfield tend to cut off the ballflow. You see that more in a game some of the older games from the 60s tend to have more midrange shots, that's because the games have 2-inch flippers as opposed to three inch flippers. You can get the range off to keep driving the ball all the way back to the back of the game. Tales of the Arabian Nights has a nice range of shots, it also has a spinney lamp that hinders some of those shots. Some people find that game to be too easy, I like it.

Are there any recent innovations?

Again, just from a pinball perspective yeah. Basically, the display the score display has transitioned over the years from a series of lights, to score wheels, to numeric displays, to alpha numeric, to dot matrix with animation. One of the things Williams did was to integrate video into their machines. The last two machines they have had a monitor. It would display everything in reverse and would bounce it off the glass so you could look at the glass, the glass was polarized, and to allow for the reflection the animation was 100% it could change what you were shooting at. And could change the whole upper playfield for every scenario. One of the reasons it didn't take off is because they went out of business shortly after that. When Jersey Jack came out with Wizard of Oz, one of the things they did was put a LCD screen in the back. So, Wizard of Oz not only do you get scores and other information, you get full color video clips with sound. It really changes the experience for the player, there's a lot more to look at for the player. They

did that with their next couple games, and it looks like the other manufactures are starting to incorporate that as well. I think part of that is those dot matrix displays really limit what you can show, because the dot matrix displays very low. Dots you can visually see, you get to an LCD panel you don't see the dots, you see whatever it is they're playing. That's one innovation that has come out recently. Just within the past year they have introduced holograms that you can target and shoot at. The new title from Jersey Jack and this is basically from the designer that did Adam's Family and Twilight Zone, Pat Waller, his latest game is called Dialed In, it integrates with your smart phone. So all of a sudden it's a whole 'nother level of user experience. How it integrates and it's through development. They're probably starting production on it.

37: 00

Do any of them use the internet or uploading high scores anything like that?

They haven't in tournament mode and I'm not sure how that works because I don't run a corset. I don't do commercial work. I know that in the slot machine side interconnectivity between the devices have been a very popular theme. That's where everyone makes their money. Basically you are no longer just trying to get the highscore in that unit you are trying to get scores that is compared as the hole production. The manufacturer gets a cut of that is one of thing that has made millions of money for the past ten years.

How do you figure pricing for your games ?

For my games games? Or for my service?

For the games.

For the pinball machines there is a book value. It is *Mr. Pinball Price Guide*, that is essentially like a wholesale value. So if you are buying a game on Craigslist and it meets the description and it works 100% in pretty good shape that gives you the wholesale price. We typically go anywhere from 50 to 100% above that, because the games we sell are typically beyond pretty good shape. They are in very good shape. They are working 100 % We have updated as needed with LED lightning, any additional modifications, new hardware as needed and we back it up with a 60 day part and service warranty. In terms of where that falls out a lot of it tends with the market. There are games from the 70's that are fully restored that will sell for 3,000 or 4,000 dollars, and you are looking that the game that the company made next could be a 300 dollar game. There's something about that title that is extremely popular. So it is worth it to put a lot of money into it to make it look perfect. For some games it's not. A guy was moving to Florida, because he is retiring, and he was trying to sell his game. His game has been in the garage for several years and it had occupants at some point. I didn't want it . "Well make me an offer" he said and I was like "I don't want it even for a 100 bucks". I'm going to drag this home and put it in my storage and it is going to sit for at least a year before I can get to it . After that I am going to have to spend 400 bucks maybe to get it up to the point where I can sell it. I payed you

100, I moved it for 100, and I put in another 400. That is 600 bucks. The best I can sell this title is maybe 600 bucks. I haven't made any money. So yeah you always have to kind of factor in, if you're selling it, are you making money ?

You mentioned craigslist, when you out looking for games. What about eBay?

I don't look for games. Multiple people find me. I have spent a lot of money on my website and I spend a good chunk of money every month for somebody to run search engine optimization.

Which I kind of understand. Again I don't need to understand it. I pay for someone to do it for me. My website basically pulls in more business than I can handle right now. So if you're in Chicago and you do a search on Chicago pinball, pinball repair, pinballs for sale, pinball restoration chances are I am going to be in the top 3, 5, or at least on the top page out of all of those searches. So when you have a pinball machine to sell, because the kids have moved out or if someone unfortunately passed away and now you are clearing out the house, they find my site. They call me up and they say "We have a pinball machine, are you interested?" I can pick and choose if I am interested in the game. Craigslist is a little iffy, because you are fighting with everybody. There is easier enough ways to search all of craigslist nationwide.

Four times a day, once in the morning, once in the afternoon, once at night, whenever and the moment you spot and it is really a deal you pick it up. I don't have that type of time. I spend most of my days on service calls and when I get home I have a three-year-old kid. So, I can't be hunting through craigslist. Ebay, I have bought stuff from ebay. I don't like it to buy games. Buying parts that are hard to find, sure, I don't have problems with it. Buying anything mechanical, you are relying on the seller to actually be accurate in the description. Same thing with Craigslist, but generally on Craigslist you haven't transferred the money until you are actually standing in front of the product. Ebay is a little tougher. Ebay has made it much easier for the buyer to get their money back, but it's still a hassle. Especially if you are having the game shipped. The game shows up and it is not what you have expected or it's in bad shape. Now you are like, "how much is this going to cost me to send it back?"

When people call you and they want to ask you if they are interested in their games has there been any like a really good find?

Occasionally. Generally either they know what it is worth or they don't. If they know what it is worth they are getting that information over the Internet and by retail prices. In which case, I won't be able to buy it, because if I can sell the game for \$5,000 and they want me to pay \$4,500 for it I don't make money. Sorry, I need to pick it up for \$2,500 to sell it for \$5000. If they don't know what it is worth, then I can give them the book and I can point them. There is one resource on the web it's Boston Pinball's website and the guys there have a heck of a lot of time in their hands. They track every completed pinball machine sell on eBay. They tabulate that data and they put it all out there for everybody to see. So you can go to Boston pinball, you can type in Adams Family, and it will basically say the average sell price for Adams Family for the past seven years have been X. The low was this, the high was this. This is based on N number of sales. They also give you the average without the high and low. There is no real way

to quantify for condition because each game is unique. Regardless of the condition that it is in , it is based on the history and its environment. That is why they give you the high and the low. Some people call me up and say "Hey such and such games, what's the worth?" I can point them to Boston pinball and I can say here's the value in Boston pinball, it is based on more than 50 sales. So you consider that as an equitable average. If it is based on one sale it can be very squeezed. I'll say this is what I pay based on that. So it is just not me saying oh "Oh this is the book value it is \$1000" "So I'll give you \$900" when the book value might be \$2,500. I give the seller an opportunity to look at public source of information.

I don't do a lot of sales. I mean if I do sales it's between now and Christmas, it is when I sell probably 90% of games I am going to sell in a year. Most of my business is service.

Do you have any specific examples of the games that you have enquired recently that are rare?

Sure, I got a couple of games of consignment. I have a Chicago Cubs game it's on consignment. So I made a different arrangement for each client in consignment, but generally the goal of consignment is for the seller to get more money than if they were to sell it to a dealer. Like I said the dealer is going to give them about half of what it is worth. I try to fix that and I get back what I put in it and some money for advertising. So I have a Cubs game in consignment, it is a very popular title. I also have a Bears game on consignment. Which I think it is around six grand, because it is one of probably less than 100 that were made. Sturn did a run of NFL titles and they took maybe 2,000 units. They deviated up among all the franchises and said "you get X amount and you get X amount" and then that is what they manufactured. It is all the same game it is just different artwork. For the Bears game I think the estimate is about 150 that have been produced and like I said they won't go back and produce more. If they were able to make more bears game it would be a totally different game. I don't think they are going to make a bears game.

Do you think there will be a arcade boom again?

Oh there is, it is bar arcades. It is the adult arcades.

It is definitely in the major metro areas. It is oriented towards adults so you have to have it in a location that has some sort of a night live. There is a recent bar arcade that was opened up called Tokens and Tankers in Mount Prospect. They are gone, because Mount Prospect does not have a real active nightlife. It would have done well in the city, which is a shame.

Reporter: If you had a chance to sit with one of your favorite game designers, what would you ask them?

I would ask them to explain what they think of the game play? What is it in their head that made them think to do this v.s that.

That is the real science behind a pinball machine. How you position the object, what the objects are valued at and a lot of it goes to the rest of it too. Fundamentally, if you don't have a good playing game, it doesn't matter how cool the artwork looks.

Are there any fun stories win in the industry?

Yeah there is a lot. Like I said a lot of my business is service. So, I'll get to visit a lot of houses. There are a lot of pretty cool houses out there. They're a house in Highland Park or Lake Forest. It basically looks over the lake. When you go down into their basement, it is basically a room. All one side of the basement is windows and you can look out to the lake it was beautiful. Another side of my business is customization. We customize pinball machines. We usually don't build one from scratch, we take an existing one and re theme it to their brand. I was contacted by a marketing company that working for Wriggly to create a pinball machine. I was contacted by the owners of the Sailor Jerry's brand to create a Sailor Jerry themed pinball machine for them. We have done custom games for Univision. We have one or two we might do next year, they tend to be big project and very complicated. They don't come very often, but we do have some pictures.

We took a game from the 60's and we completely rethemed it. Everything that was art related that you can see was rethemed to Sailor Jerry as opposed to Royal Guard. This was a proof that we ran so the score windows are all blocked up, but otherwise they would be clear. They provided all the artwork. It is their brand. It has a swordfish, which is really cool. During game play, when you light up certain lights, it actually illuminates the swordfish, which you can see in the art work.

The flippers if they get misaligned they start digging in ot the play fields. So if they are not perpendicular to the field it will scratch up the plain field. So somebody had tried covering up the scratches by painting it brown, but they realized they had to paint all around the baseline. As you can see this was hand painted by someone that doesn't have a lot of painting skills. So my guys sanded all that stuff off, recreated all the artwork, restored everything, and put it all together. So this is the close up of it after it was all done. Clear-coded it with a mac/matte finished, this is one of the pop pumper rinks from the game. Basically when you hit the skirt, the way a pop pumper works is it comes down to kick the ball out. The lights aren't even the same size. Screwed in it's trying to do this every time. Clearly what was done was they resealed that leg, the fact it was shorter didn't even bother them they just tried screwing it down. That's why PATH said they don't do service on games they didn't sell, because they you never know what

you're getting into. From start to finish, we re-did the woodwork. There's the original wood work. We sanded it down, we stained it , and we polished it. You can't see the game had wooden legs, so we did the same on the legs. Everything all matches. That's more of the work we do know instead of the service work, because these are bigger projects and they pay better.

When you recreate the artwork, do you redraw everything?

If it needs to be redrawn, we redraw it. I have guys that do that. I do very little of the restoration work, I do all the field service work. I have a couple of guys working for me that are in the shop ,but I'm spend most of the days out doing service work.

You mentioned you have a couple of guys working for you, are they friends or are they people that share the similar interests?

They are people that were interested in the pinball industry, they have their own businesses. That's part of the deal. I have no employee, that's a \$4,000 insurance bill. If you have one employee in the State of Illinois, you are required for workers comp and probably have commercial liability, that's like a couple grand a year. Then they audit your operation then find out you have other people working here that don't have workers comp and you are liable for it. So all the guys here are generally one man's operation, just like me. So made with pinball, write a check to Danzel electronics service and that's it. It's like hiring a plumber and/or writing a check to home depot. I dont have nothing to do where that money goes and I don't have any unemployment. I used to have an employee and it buried the business. One year I got hit with a \$4,000 insurance bill in the middle of the summer, which is our slow season, and I don't make that kind of money. If I have 4 grand it's tied up on a game somewhere, It's not sitting in the back.

Can you described events that you showcased? If you showcased machines?

Sure, The one show we go to is the ChicagoLand Show in Saint Charles twice a year they have a spring and fall show. We bring games and set up and share a booth with one of our biggest competitor, which is also a business partner of mine. This business is really small on the pinball side certainly. The nice thing about that show is that's it's in a convention center with a big garage door in back, it's intended for you to sell stuff. So people walk around and buy stuff, they buy it, u break it down, you say Ill meet you at your car door, you pay me and then load it in truck. Then goodbye.

I used to show at a pinball expo which takes place at a hotel ballroom. They had set up hours and tear down hours where you could use the service hallway behind the ballroom, but if in the middle of the show, you sell a game, they don't want you dragging it through their service quarter because they are doing food service and they certainly they don't want you dragging it out through the front door. It's not oriented towards selling games, if you wanna bring something to show, that's great, but if imma pay for space, imma pay for a space I can sell something.

Is there anything in particular you showcase?

I typically do the older games. Like that guy from the 30s, fully restored. My friend has a lot modern of games, he tends to not deal with anything other than in the 90s & 2000s and since he's letting me share the space with him, I generally don't put up games to compete with his. If someone's looking for a Adams family game or Twilight Zone, they're not going to be happy with a golden harvest, they aren't in the market, so we don't conflict there.

Have you ever designed you own machine?

No.

Do you receive a lot of donations for machines or from older generation or are they just hoped to be sold?

They are generally to sell, I don't get donations. We have donated stuff in the past. There was a charity event where they were looking for a pinball machine and I gave it to them, took right off. There was a point I was getting into arcade games. And I blocked some arcade games from Sega out of gameworks. So basically gameworks contacted us and they said hey we are refreshing all of the games from our Schaumburg location, want to come take a look. And I went to take a look and saw a sit down Star wars game, it was the trilogy game. and I was like wow this is cool and it was big with a 15 inch monitor in, what you asking for it ? 300 bucks. Basically all we could use from the game was the monitor and I could get a new monitor for \$300, so we sell it for 300 buck. That was a mistake, I spent 1,200 bucks. They sat in storage for years, because every time someone called they'd say, " hey I see you advertise this game and I want it in my basement." And I ask, "where is your basement?" and they're like "downstairs", and I'm like "no", once he said stairs, I was like no. The only way to put it in a home is only through garage . A lot of people would call me and say "I am interested in the game" and I tell them " I would sell it to you, but I can't because it won't fit in your space" they would respond "could we try" and I would say " No" , because that will const a lot more money. We would take it to you, you'll see that this won't fit, and you're going to say you want your money back and I would have to take it back. I just wasted a whole day. So I got a call from a charity in Orland Park called , "The Garage" they are a garage that was converted to an after school youth space. They have a stage, a place to serve pizza , and they got a bunch of games. It is a space where kids can go after school and stay out of trouble. Sounds great , there you go . I need the storage space. No one calls me up and say "hey we want to give you stuff"

If somebody wanted to go play pinball games, where would you say they have the best time to do that?

Probably one of the bar arcade like Capital or Podium. If they are in Indian, Twin Cades in Hammond. Gallop and ghost has a ton of games. They have a couple pinball machines that are deep somewhere in their location. There is a site called pinball chicago , where you can look up places where you can play pinball.

Do they have where they can play old games ?

That one in particular you can not play. It is payout games. That one is a gambling device. And honestly most kids aren't interesting in playing something that old. In 1949, there were no flippers, this game has no flippers, and this game didn't originally run by electricity, but it ran off by batteries. The way this works this by putting nickels in and you get 10 balls and you want to collect all but one type of vegetable and get harvest move and then get 15 cents back. Once you play all your ball, it has a odds system and calculates all that you played. Nothing runs through electricity but that odds system. It's definitely gambling, this is what they had in mind in the 40s when they were banning pinball machines. This is also a consignment game and unfortunately I don't think it will sell because it's 4 grand and we did all the restoration of it. It's a gorgeous game but when you think about it as a game when you have kids around to play, kids won't play it. We had to do a lot of work to make it work through wall power because the batteries aren't made anymore, they stopped making them in the 70s, and you wouldn't want to have batteries in these kind of games because they're not usually user changeable because they can die, they can destroy stuff. So when you plug it in, it's like a normal game you can play.