

He zaps the bugs and ghosts which haunt your video games

WHEN PAC-MAN EATS one too many dots or Space Invaders runs out of menacing aliens, Roy Randolph is ready with the cure.

"People think this is all fun and games. But I might get 10 minutes every once and a while to enjoy a game. When you walk into an arcade with a 70-pound tool box, you've got to work while everyone else in the place is having fun."

The 21-year-old Royal Oak man is the sole repairman for Video Commercial Services of Southfield. And although he's wheelchair-bound, Randolph spends a portion of his job in arcades, working the bugs out of broken video games. The rest of the time is spent in a workshop surrounded by game posters and machines.

Paralyzed by a gun accident seven

years ago, Randolph took up video game repair after graduating from an electronics course at the State Technical Institute and Rehabilitation Center, a school run by the state school board.

He says the handicap doesn't interfere with his job.

"I took just about every shop class there was in high school. I always wanted to do something with my hands because I'm mechanically inclined."

"Once I got into electronics I really enjoyed it because of the thrill of working with the unknown — not knowing what's wrong with a game and having to find out myself."

DIAGNOSING A VIDEO problem means Randolph must be familiar with the way each game works, as well as the electronics involved. He plays each game before it leaves the shop. That

makes him an expert of sorts, although he doesn't admit to being a video junkie.

"When I go home I prefer to stay home instead of going to an arcade. I may earn my money from them, but I'm not about to spend it on them," he says with a laugh.

"When I do walk into an arcade I look for the challenging games. Since I've had experience repairing them and

getting into more complex modes of play, I know what to expect from most games."

"But my favorite games aren't on the market yet."

He attended a video game convention this year to view new models and game prototypes. Video fans can expect to see more three-dimensional versions and combination pinball-video games on the market this year.

ANN GRIMES/staff photographer

At work in his Southfield office, Randolph inspects the inner workings of a malfunctioning video game.

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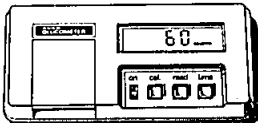
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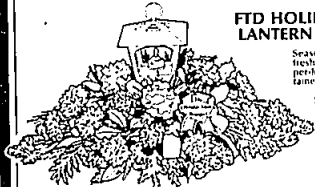
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