



A form of pop art in brilliant, flashing colors, the decorative machines each have a particular identity.



Pinball machines require the same degree of skill as a radio or television to be kept in good working order.

Photos by  
Harry Mauthe

## Pinball: The rage that's hitting teenagers and adults

By CORINNE ABATT

The Fireball record is 183,700, established by Jon Puskarch last month, according to the note taped on the pinball machine.

Fireball is a big draw. It's hard to say why unless you are a pinball addict, like many who play the 30 machines at the controversial Abby Road, Orchard Lake Road between Twelve and Thirteen Mile, in Farmington Hills. The rest come to bask in the camaraderie of knob pushers and pullers, admiring the body English and fast reflex skill.

The sign over the door says "Abby Road Amusement, Inc." It's hardly an arcade; there are no peek machines or candy dispensers. The walls and floors are bare. Fifteen machines line each wall and a couple of football tables and an air hockey game are in the center.

The partner-owners at the front desk, Glen Kealy and Jerome Bischoff, say they have rules and the patrons respect that.

"We don't want any violence, dope, beer drinking or rowdiness," says Bischoff, a big man few would argue with, "and the kids respect that."

IN PLACE OF canned music, there is the click-click of metal balls bouncing against plastic flippers, the constant tinkle of bells as the scores are made, the flash of lights on the machines—steady, rhythmic sounds—background music for the mechanical age.

It is an off-the-street family room. The players know each other. Most are regulars. They come every day, stopping at the front desk for a handful of quarters, saying hello to Bischoff and Kealy, striding slowly over to a favorite machine—Spanish Eyes, Circus, Gulfstream, Monte Carlo, Dealers Choice, Honey or Triple Action.

While the clientele is mostly young, 14-25, Bischoff takes particular pride in area businessmen who stop in during lunch hours, the Army recruiters who come in during coffee breaks and

the young women who feel safe dropping in to play air hockey or O X O, a mechanical Ping Pong game.

Committed pinball players are different from the socializers.

"It's all-consuming," says one. "When you play that machine, you forget everything—the world outside, your troubles, your job—everything."

It is man against machine as the committed player takes careful stance in front of the machine, lining the feet up, one slightly under the machine, the other back, arms down and forward, hands grasping the sides of the rectangular board.

As the ball moves down the board

and through the flippers, the player mentally and physically follows the action, interrupting and correcting the pattern with his movement.

"That's called English," says Bischoff, "to achieve skill, you have to use English. When you can't use English, it takes the fun out of it."

THE COMMITTED come alone

One says Kealy drops in every day, checks to see if his favorite, Fireball, is open, leaves if it is and tries again later. The girls come in twos and threes. They do as much watching as playing. Two 14-year-olds said they come almost every day. They were

worried their mothers might object.

To what? Only soft drinks are available. The talk is casual and relatively quiet. The machines are the focal points.

Bischoff admits some amusement centers have a bad name.

"Overall," said Bischoff, "kids here come from white collar, executive families. They behave well, 98 percent are really good kids, the other two percent behave or don't come in."

He looks at the crowd, about one-fourth girls.

"There are more girls than I have ever seen in arcades before. The social stigma is gone."



Kibitzing is accepted as long as you don't touch the machine in action.



By mid-afternoon on a hot August day, almost every pinball machine is in use.

Sing a song of six pence,  
autumn's on its way.  
Betsy Daniels' country looks  
dress up a girl's school day.

From BETSY DANIELS for SHUTTERBUG: happy little looks for the serious business of going back to school. Left, jacket dress in check, print and polka dot combination. Jacket in cotton, sleeveless dress in polyester cotton Red/white/blue. Sizes 7 to 14, \$12. Right, cotton quilted jumper in a country-inspired red and yellow calico print with bric-brac trim. Sizes 7 to 14, 9.50; 4 to 6x, 8.50. Shown, just two of the many looks you'll find in our Betsy Daniels collection. In Girls' Dresses and Sportswear at Northland and Oakland. See a Betsy Daniels' fashion show at Northland, Aug. 14th at 1 p.m.

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