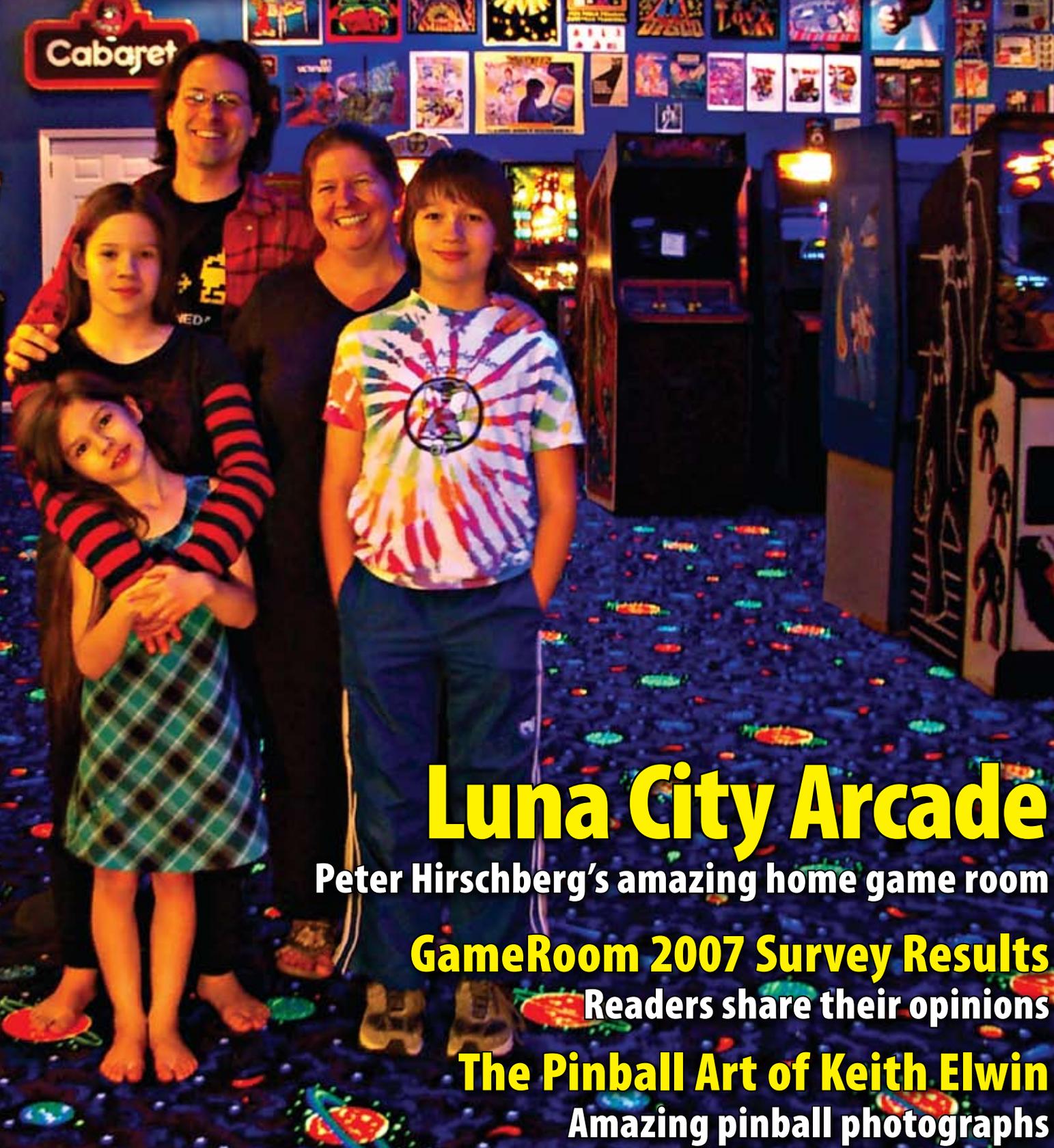


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Luna City Arcade

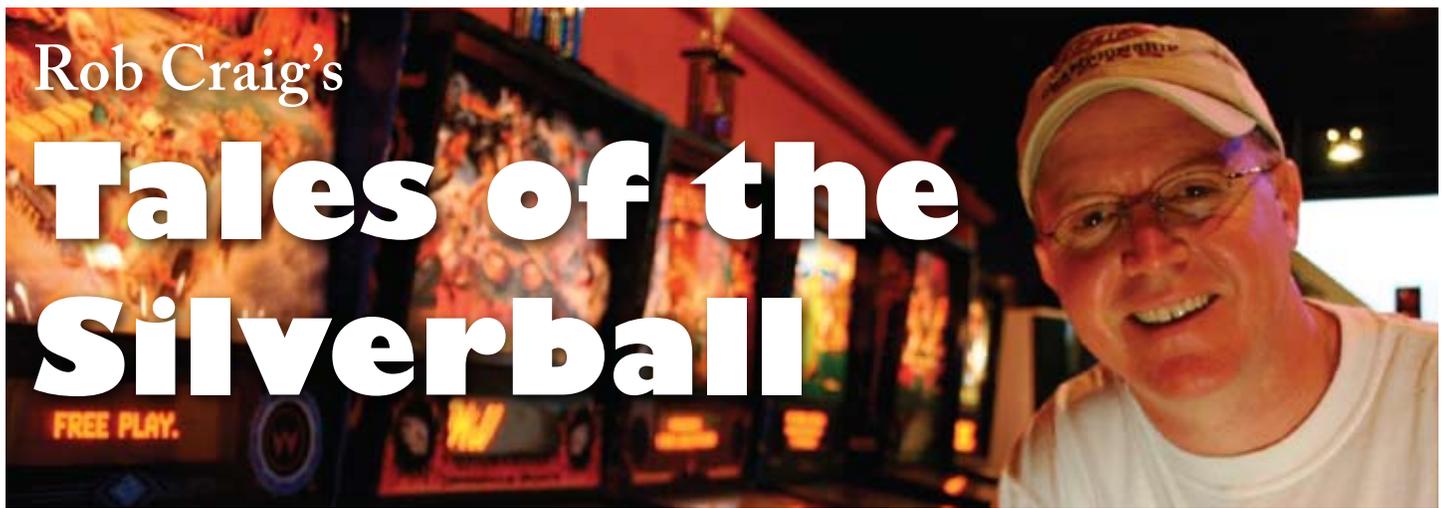
Peter Hirschberg's amazing home game room

GameRoom 2007 Survey Results

Readers share their opinions

The Pinball Art of Keith Elwin

Amazing pinball photographs



"A Picture is Worth..." Keith Elwin's Pinball Photography

A picture is often worth a thousand words, or at times, no words come quickly as you react to what you see. Maybe a smile, or a feeling of temporary amazement envelopes you. Sometimes there's a lot to discuss, other times you just have to absorb it for a while.

Art appreciation gels perfectly with pinball photography in my opinion. I am one that can just look over machines and get a lot of satisfaction. After all, isn't a pinball machine a small scale world underneath the glass? And with mid-80's machines and newer, there's physically more to absorb in this silverball wonderland.

But there is this matter of perspective that is almost always overlooked as one casually browses over a machine. There are fantastic viewpoints and unique lighting that are found while placing a camera in unique locations, along with distinct photographic settings that can only be achieved by using high quality cameras merged with the skill and knowledge of modern photography. The result, when done correctly, is nothing short of stunning.

If you're a regular reader of *Tales of the Silverball*, you surely remember last year's article about Kevin Tiehl. Kevin's shots were typically focused on older EM machines. Here we have another perspective from Keith Elwin. Wait, did I say Keith Elwin? Indeed. This is *the* Keith Elwin that hovers in the #1 spot on the WPPR rankings on a regular basis. If you've seen him play, you know that he's a true pinball wizard.

What most people don't know is that Keith is also a fantastic photographer. And his understanding of pinball from the player and restorer perspective provides a unique character to his photographs. What follows is the result of a recent discussion between



the two of us. Enjoy the photographs as you read along.

Keith works for an operator, specifically in pinball restoration. With photography as a hobby since high school, he has the experience and skill to continue shooting photos for web site design, eBay listings, and other graphic design purposes. Selecting pinball as a subject to shoot is undoubtedly a natural choice. As Keith puts it, "I think they (pinball machines) are fascinating! What could be better than to combine my two favorite hobbies! I also have great access to many machines at my work (www.areasamusements.com)

so as the machines get shopped, I try to do a photo shoot before they get put back on location."

What kind of pinball machines do you like to shoot? Any specific genre? Manufacturer? Theme?

"Kevin Tiehl has some really nice pictures that he sells at California Extreme but they are mostly 60's machines. I have been trying to capture the DMD generation for the people who grew up with those games instead. Although I do have some older machines I have done, I try to concentrate on the newer stuff."



As we both know, the ball is crazy on the playfield. What do you hope to capture in a single instant with these pictures?

"I hope to capture something that normally happens so fast you would never know it is happening :) I violate a lot of photography composition rules when shooting but sometimes it must be done to get just the right reflection or angle to capture everything in the frame I am hoping for."

How different is it to shoot modern DMD machines compared to older 'flat' machines?

"I believe it is much harder to shoot DMD games as far as lighting goes due to hotspots from GI lights, shiny clearcoated playfields, and having the machine sunk deeper into the playfield. But the upside is of course the ramps and other depth of field objects. Older machines have much less GI, diffused playfields from all the wear and tear, and are generally much more colorful."

Do you shoot with a digital camera or film?

"I use a digital SLR camera with 4 lenses (macro, wide, fisheye, zoom)"







Do you have to set up additional lighting to get the shot to look right?

“Yes. This is 90% of the pain of shooting the picture. Especially with the DMD machines which sit deep in the cabinet and have many general illumination lights. Often times I will have to remove some of the light bulbs because they are creating glare. Another problem is background. When shooting close-ups of the ball you are almost getting a 180 degree reflection. So if you have your Daisy Duke poster hanging on the wall anywhere near where you are shooting it will surely show up on the ball as well as any ceiling lights.”

How much work do you have ahead with the image after you shoot it? In other words, what level of post photography editing is involved?

“If you shoot just right you can do as little as 5 minutes of post production. I have gotten to the point now where I know where to position everything so I can avoid having to Photoshop out a background image or light glare or reflection of the camera. I still use Photoshop to touch up specks of dust or tweak some colors. You would be amazed at how the tiniest speck of dust or hair will show up on the pictures.”



What's your favorite shot?

“My favorite is Dracula because the colors just came together so well in that picture.”

Anyone can order a print of the photos featured in this article or one of the many

others showcased on the DaveyCat Design website. The current photo sizes are 8.5” x 11” 13”x19” without matting. Keith also supplies mattes if you need them. Visit his site at www.pinballreviews.com/pixindex.htm to view, get pricing, and order. **GR**