

# GAMEROOM

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## HOT STUFF!

### The GameRoom Gift Guide 2008

#### Pinball Expo

Reports from the show

#### The Heartland Show

Pinball player's paradise



Dream Arcades  
Octane 120



## The 4th Annual Heartland Pinball Supershow



### Recreational Shows vs. Trade Shows

There is a stark difference in putting on a show and attending one. Most obvious ones are the amount of planning meetings, begging (for charity auction items), and physical labor in moving games. But there are similarities. I speak for all of the pinball die-hards involved in the Supershow when I say that we too have a great time at the show – in much the same way as anyone in attendance would have. Before I fill you in this year's Heartland Pinball & Arcade Supershow, let's analyze a little of what it takes for the average person to enjoy a pinball show, and why I would make such a statement.

A recreational or hobby show like the Supershow, or Pinball Expo, is quite different than an industry trade show. In industry shows, most people that attend are actually getting paid to go. The flight or drive, hotel room, meals, and show registration don't cost

them a dime. I've been to industry shows where exhibitors are crammed into tiny cubes, trying to draw in passing attendees with magical slogans, technology, and the latest el-cheapo marketing freebie. It slightly reminds me of the trailers filled with games at a carnival, where the words of the game host crackle in the damp evening air as he begs you to pay \$2 to throw balls, plastic rings, or a dart. People attend these shows out of duty for the most part. Exhibitors put up their booths to grab your attention and earn your money. People don't normally attend these types of shows to reunited with friends, or to have "fun" at the show. They might have a lot of fun somewhere else, but not normally at the show.

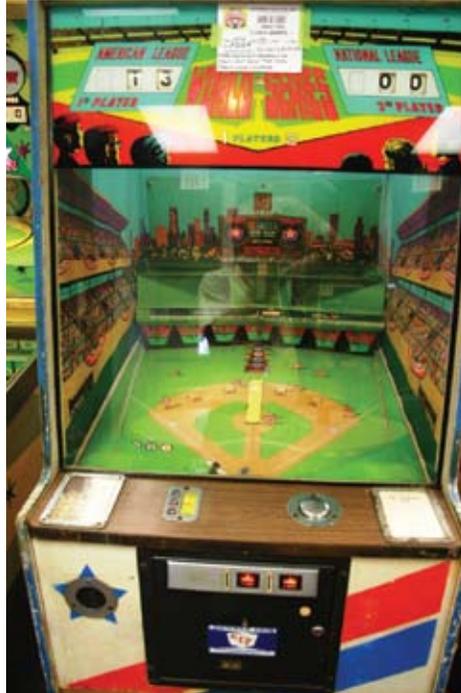
### Growth of Regional Pinball Shows

Pinball shows are growing across the world. In the US, we see a new show pop up each

year. These are far from corporate industry focused events, but rather recreational. They're essentially monster pinball arcades and pinball flea markets. And with that change of environment is the attendee's need for a different kind of fulfillment. I believe that those that attend shows like these are looking for many different things – like camaraderie among the like-minded, friendship beyond a newsgroup or forum, others to play impromptu tournaments, and many who just want to play. Pinball is quite lonely when you don't share it with someone else. It is no wonder that the lineup of pinball shows has grown. With that also goes the financial burden though. No business is footing the bill to attend shows like these. The pinball enthusiast has to pay their own gas, hotel, food, and show registration. So it makes sense that regional shows are growing, and the Supershow is a good example of that.

### The 4th Annual Heartland Pinball Supershow

With that dragging intro, I present a report from the 4th year of the Supershow in Herrin, IL. Once again, we held the event at the inviting atmosphere of the Herrin Civic Center. This small town show, 2 hours from St. Louis (and 6 hours from Chicago) based in the southern-most part of Illinois continues to grow. It has been known as a place for regional pinheads to converge with their playing skill, pinball restoration pieces, and a celebration of friendships old and new. For this year, we decided to add seminars to the show activities. Since the Supershow is a 2 day event, the seminars were scheduled on Saturday. The facility has a massive auditorium with a large stage that were used for the addition. The speakers and 40+ attendees



were seated on the stage with plenty of room to spare. During the seminars, the players room remained open, and those interested in either are allowed to quietly come and go as they please.

### Seminars

After opening remarks from Steve Rothschild, I led the first seminar covering the construction of Mini-Pin (see the GameRoom Oct. 2008 cover story). The little pinball simulator was in the facility and

gathered interest throughout the show. Following me was Chris Hibler of Team-EM. Chris had a very detailed and informative technical seminar that educated everyone on how to read EM schematics. His ability to convey technical information is superb, and his seminar was heavily attended by EM and solid state pinball restorers. After a break for lunch, pinball pro Derek Fugate left the Showdown tournament area long enough to present an instructional seminar to help average pinball players learn new techniques.

Several people were allowed to gather around a Gottlieb Volley machine while others in the audience watched a video feed on a large projection screen. Derek demonstrated slap saves, ball passes from flipper to flipper, and gave a live view of some of the more risky shot techniques that newer players use when playing pinball. Finishing up the lineup was Brian Saunders, another Team EM member, who has one of the largest collections of pinballs in the world. Brian shared the story of how he found interest in pinball as a child, and later, the passion of collecting and restoring. His stories turned to non-stop weekend pinball gathering and traveling mishaps. There were plenty of laughs for everyone.

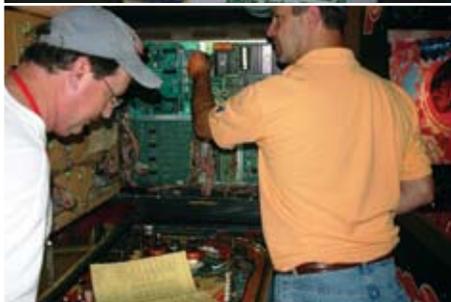
### Pinball Showcase

In the main hall, players came in droves over both days. Attendance numbers exceeded all previous years both Friday and Saturday totaling a 30% increase overall, and at least a 40% increase in those driving from 2 hours or more away. The Supershow has previously been labeled as the best player's show in the US. This year, that theme rang true again with some of the best quality machines to ever make it to the show. Collectors and restorers like Rob Anthony (2007 Best of Show Winner), Tim Zollner, Charles Sanderson, Derek Fugate, Brian Bannon, Chris Hibler, JT Artis, and others, matched the usual donators to bring the total number of machines to right around 100. Some of the rarer machines at the Supershow included A.G. Soccer, Skateball, Cheetah, Radical, Lost World, Warlok, Mystic, and several EM's from Brian Saunder's collection. Each year, the show staff vote on a contributor to receive the Best of Show award. Brian Bannon and his father received the 2008 award for perfect restorations (including NOS playfields) of Cheetah, Mystic, & Skateball.

### Tournament Winners

The Showdown at Sundown once again brought out the best players in the region.





Youth division winners were (1<sup>st</sup>) Joshua Henderson, (2<sup>nd</sup>) Nathan Goett, and (3<sup>rd</sup>) Misha Bulia. Women's division winners were (1<sup>st</sup>) Amanda Brooks, (2<sup>nd</sup>) Carol Walker, (3<sup>rd</sup>) Michelle Whitley. Men's division winners were (1<sup>st</sup>) Zach Sharpe, (2<sup>nd</sup>) Derek Fugate, (3<sup>rd</sup>) John Miller. The Final Showdown (payout) winners were (1<sup>st</sup>) Zach Sharpe, (2<sup>nd</sup>) Derek Fugate, and a tie for 3<sup>rd</sup> between John Miller and Adam McKinnie.

We once again held a free Future Pinball Wizards tournament for children 5 and under. Peyton Craig won with five children competing.

### The Crystal Ball

This little show is not so little anymore. I've had several people from around the world

ask me what the secret ingredients are that have made this show grow over the years, now taking it's turn towards 5 years old. I could say things like hard work, passion, vision, and money. All would be true. But the "x-factor" is the heart and soul of those that make the show happen. You have to lose any selfishness about sharing your toys, and be willing to share them with other people. Keep your financial expectations at breaking even, and celebrate any future budget dollars you get. Make a portion of the show about giving, and set up an avenue for charity. The purpose must be greater than yourself. If your heart is in that state, those that attend will see it and find your purpose contagious. With that in mind, the Supershow and other regional shows will continue to find success! GR



Several are missing, but this is the weary crew that was left over on Saturday night. Those pictured bottom row, left to right: Dennis Blankenship, Steve Rothschild, Rob Craig, Ken Hall, Brian Saunders. Back Row, L to R: Mark Czarnowski, Derek Fugate, Chris Jesckne, Connie Jesckne, JT Artis, Dave Prater, Chet Langin, Aaron Gross, Darren Sheldon, Nina Hall, Dan, and finally, Damon Fairbanks. Not Pictured - Holly Hall, Chris Hibler, - Machine donaters - Rob Anthony, Don Brownback, Brian Bannon, Tim Zollner, Chuck Sanderson, and others. I apologize for not remembering them all.

ON THE WEB:  
 Official Site: <http://supershow.popbumper.com>  
 Seminar MP3's : <http://supershow.popbumper.com/seminars.html>  
 Slideshow: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/popbumper/sets/72157607467638964/show/>