

July 29, 1979
939 College Ave.
Racine, Wisconsin
53403

Dear Mr. Fabris,

I received my back issues of the Arcadian together with #8. Am quite pleased with them. Some of the material is way over my head at present. I would suggest that for next years, ^{1980's} you plan to arrange the printed material on the page so as to leave room for hole punching to save the issues in a binder. They are well worth saving.

Two days ago I received a preliminary "Hacker's Manual" from Bally. My copy was 16 mimeographed pages plus cover which had a notation the contents could be changed when they decide to issue it in a printed bound edition. A letter from them mentioned they DO NOT expect to produce the Keyboard addition this year.

Bally's distribution must be out of whack. A couple of weeks ago I ordered the Amazing Maze/Tic-Tac-Toe cartridge from Montgomery Ward's catalog and got it within 3 days. A fellow, who sells the Arcade and its accessories tells me he has a standing order for all new Arcade items and gets more promises than anything else from a wholesale distributor up in Milwaukee. He had been trying to get that cartridge ever since he first heard about it. He also hasn't been able to get any service information out of either Bally or that distributor. He had to touch up all 4 of the hand controls that came with my unit. Even so, ^{TUG} joy-stick can be very touchy with diagonal action being quite iffy.

Bally's instruction book mentions 100 lines of scrolling in connection with the calculator. I checked it out by adding: 1+2+3....etc through +100 to find I could scroll back only to +8. Don't know if something is wrong or if that is due to production variations????

Got the "Slot Machine" on tape and running after having quite a time eliminating all the mistakes I made. Yesterday after running the thing for nearly two hours I finally hit the jackpot. It paid off only at 17 to 1 instead of the 18 to one as programmed. I checked line 3000 and have it correct as printed. Will have to double check everything else when I have more time. From what I remember from a 1947 Las Vegas visit this game follows the action of the real machines quite closely. The game could do better without the machine disappearing after a few wins and the screen gets a bit cluttered with the list of previous wins. And, of course having the cherries, oranges, lemons, bars, etc appear instead of words would be a lot more realistic. I did get a slot machine tape through one of the ads in your publication. It pays off too often while the one in issue #8 is a bit too stingy. Slot machine game programmers should bear in mind that the jack-pot amount can vary. Usually there is a guaranteed minimum plus a variable amount over that. At least that is what I read about them in a magazine a number of years ago. I would guess the improvements I have suggested would require the

forthcomming(?) keyboard and a larger memory???

The Checkers game in #6 has me puzzled. Was expecting a regular checkerboard on the TV screen. Right now its beginning to soak-in that I should take a checkerboard and number the squares and move the pieces around as the numbers on the screen direct.???? I put in the corrections mentioned in issue #7. Have also listed the programing several times to compare it with the printing, in your magazine. Will have to check everything again. A 2 can look like a 5; ditto for 3, 8, B, when you wear bifocals, smog is making your eyes smart, etc. A ; can look like a : if hand written too close to a line or the copy machine isnt doing a perfect job. All in all its still an interesting challenge.

I liked the video art thing in #6 together with its expansion in #7; hope you can have more of them. Havent been able to originate any of my own but did come up with several variations of that Perspective Box shown in Bally's Basic booklet. Got them going in all 4 corners and a small group of 4 on top of a large group of 4.

In issue #1 I read of your interest in E H Scott radios. One of the Horlicks of the malted milk factory that used to operate here in Racine had one. An elderly fellow that used to live near here had one. He got quite mad at the Scott Co. when something non-standard on it broke and new owners of the factory refused to do anything about it. A fellow- $\frac{1}{2}$ block from here had one. He was moving to a smaller apartment and tried to sell it. My mother saw it and fell in love with the cabinet work and sent me over to see what I thought of it. It sounded almost as good as quality mid 1960s stereophonic equipment. Was told that when the factory crew delivered it the power supply and amplifier chassis were so heavy they had to be carried up the stairs seperatly-a two man job for each. I didnt like it because it was mono, the record player did not look good, and I figured we would have one heck of a time getting competent repair work. As to the cruddy record player I've since heard the same criticism from another fellow. He said the electronics were superb with the AM tuning section being far better than the AM section of many of today's expensive AM FM stereo outfits. But the record players were not always of the best available even from their own time period. The fellow eventually sold it and bought an Admiral radio-phono console! And it wasnt because he couldnt afford better. I guess he just didnt know better. The fellow who told me about the cruddy record players in ~~###~~ EH Scott consoles also mentioned the AM tuners in most of today's high priced Stereo receivers ~~are~~ all too often quite junky even though the FM section may be of superb quality. He claimed some of the AM tuners were not as good as in some of the cheaper car radios! Eventually my mother bought an HH Scott Copely console thinking it was the same co. The two Scotts were not even related. Its the only console that got a rave review in High Fidelity but the right phono pre-amp board breaks down ~~#~~ about every 3 years. The repair-man has had the chassis for over a month now; he said it would take about a week. Sorry for the typos, am writing this late Saturday night and am a bit tired; not an expert typest either.

Sincerely,

Robert W Dahl

Robert W Dahl