

Meet the man keeping hope, and 70-year-old pinball machines, alive



It was about this time that something else began: The Pinball Resource.

Becoming The Resource

Young's obsession with pinball dates back to the early '70s, when he was a college student at Lehigh University studying metallurgical engineering, a discipline that would eventually lead to a career at IBM. He and his friends became fascinated by the game.

"Being a bunch of engineers and math people and so forth, we got our fingers in there, and if we couldn't fix something, the tech came, and we'd watch him and learn from him," he said.

Eventually, Young and a friend began operating multiple

machines, called “running a route” in the industry. “We had, like, 26 games out on campus at Lehigh. So, to maintain that, you’ve got to have parts.” As Young’s personal and professional pinball collections grew, so did his collection of parts, which he eventually started selling to others.

“By the time I graduated college, I had probably 30 or 40 games of my own outside of the games we were operating, and then I needed to maintain and fix those. And I kind of just stumbled into doing that, and I started advertising in some of the early magazines,” Young said.

He took out an ad in Pinball Trader Newsletter, the biggest publication for the hobby at the time. The magazine’s editor, Dennis Dodel, dubbed Young “The Pinball Resource.”

“The name stuck,” Young said.

Beneath the glass

If there’s one thing you need to know about pinball machines, it’s that they break—a lot. You’d never know it, thanks to the surprisingly effective sound-deadening properties of the glass under which it’s played, but a game of pinball is shockingly violent. Each 80-gram silver ball gains remarkable inertia as it catapults from one target to another.

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