

Video madness

EMU recreation center supplies students, faculty with daily electronic 'fix'

Object of game is to shoot as many Robots as possible and escape from room.

It's the only place on campus where bleeps and obscenities are the standard, accepted form of communication. It's also one of few activities on campus that still costs a quarter.

For a large number of mostly male students, faculty and even administrators, the EMU Arcade is a cheap, exciting, electronic answer to the frustrations of hitting and balancing the books.

For Mal Fiese, manager of the EMU Rec Center, the 11 pinball and 14 video games are hard cash. The contract year for the machines, which ended in



March, brought the EMU Rec Center a profit of \$47,000 — 62 percent of the quarters dumped in the machines.

"There's some people that come down here every day — you can set your watch by them," Fiese says. The players begin arriving at 7:30 a.m., when two men show up each morning for their daily "fix" of video, he says.

On a busy day, the recreation center cashier goes through \$500-\$600 in quarters, he says. Players who used to get four quarters now ask for \$2 to \$5 worth, he adds. Some people drop as much as \$25 a week on the games, "but maybe that's all they do," Fiese says.

The games currently are the biggest money maker in the

recreation center. Bowling, now the second most popular activity, used to outdo the machines 2-to-1 just six years ago, Fiese says.

Yet Fiese thinks the machines aren't doing nearly as well as they could be. Part of the reason is students just don't have as much money for recreation, he says. But another reason may be that the EMU doesn't have the most popular machines, Fiese admits.

What games are missing? Student video fans rattle off Pac-Man, Tempest, Galaga and Donkey Kong as a few of the new machines that haven't appeared in the EMU.

Also contributing to lost revenue is the deteriorating condition of the machines, Fiese says.

"It's not that the people don't want to come down here and play. It's just that they won't come down to play a piece of junk," he says. "The recreation dollar is getting stretched awfully thin. We can only compete with what we have."

The EMU is beginning the second year of a three-year contract with Canteen Company of Oregon, which provides and maintains all 25 machines. Company representative Harvey Zeugin says the machines are "rotated all the time — as necessary."

However, in the words of a once-a-day video player, "They've taken out the most



Eyes riveted to the game, this weary student battles a tireless, electronic opponent.

popular game every time."

In January, the recreation center had to build a wall around the machines. Thieves were entering the EMU and breaking into the machines at night, Fiese says. "They have to bust it to get

into it — and they bust it good."

He says the EMU lost a "significant" amount of money. Luckily, Canteen repaired the damage.

In spite of failing to achieve the profits he would like, Fiese admits

the machines are a pretty good deal.

"It's pretty much gravy for us," he says. "We're doing all right."

By Ann Portal
Photos by Mark Pynes

Child care, club sports face EMU review

The budgets for the University Child Care Center and Club Sports were the subject of testimony before the EMU budget committee Thursday.

Student-parents spoke of the need to keep the child care center intact, calling the on-campus center "care you can't get anywhere else." Another parent said the service is "first class care" that is "good for the kids."

Though the program currently serves approximately 170 parents, EMU Board chairer Bob Needham said the committee should "scale down" the program.

The toddler program is currently operating at only 72

percent of capacity, said Mary-Curtis Gramley, child care coordinator. The number of children entered in the program is expected to decrease in the future with declining enrollment, she said.

Several club sport members testified in defense of the program in their respective activities.

"The University is getting a heck of a deal," said Scott Chesnut, crew member, referring to the \$52,000 the University put into the crew program. "Our club sports are quite reputable and are definitely improving."

Club sports serves some 600 students, including

teams such as crew, water polo and rugby.

The major expenditure the budget committee questioned was a food subsidy for those teams that travel. The IFC has a policy against subsidizing food and the board should consider such a policy, said Karsten Rasmussen, budget committee member and IFC chairer.

But the program is directed toward on-campus students who will generally have to pay out-of-pocket expenses to participate in the off-campus trips if this subsidy is eliminated, program director Sandy Vaughn said.

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