

Game combines spelling with roulette wheel

Oregonian tries to market new board game

By Allan Lazo
Of the Emerald

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream. So does Tony Aceti.

King's dream was civil rights for blacks. Aceti's dream? To market his new board game, Mingle Word-Roulette, across the nation. Someday.

But the 28-year old rancher and hay hauler from Silver Lake, near Bend, is going about fulfilling his dream in a much different fashion, although with about the same conviction.

Aceti was in Eugene recently to introduce and promote his Mingle Word-Roulette game that consists of a roulette wheel labeled with various letters of the alphabet and some special spaces instead of numbers.

"I truly believe the game came from 'Wheel of Fortune' and the Jumble word game," Aceti says of the game that has been in the making since 1974.

But just where do Aceti and his conviction to his dream fit into all of this?

In 1981, Aceti's mother, Rose, who had developed the original game, written the instructions and worked on gaining the copyright, died of cancer. From the time of his

mother's death until the release of the first game in May 1985, Aceti worked to fulfill his dream of getting the game on the market.

"I've got a dream here that I'm going to fulfill," Aceti says. "The learning experience in the last year has been tremendous, and I've got this burning desire to accomplish this."

Aceti says he has learned a whole new career in the year since his game has been in production. He says the first problem was finding the company that manufactured the roulette wheels he uses.

Then he had to find a way to get all of the letters over the numbered slots in the wheel.

Although many games were sold during last Christmas season, Aceti says his company is still working on selling the first 2,000 games produced. During the holidays, Aceti says 1,000 games were sold in 10 days in Bend and Klamath Falls.

The games were assembled and packaged in Silver Lake by Aceti and 20 other workers.

Now, Aceti says he is working on the most important aspect of the business: marketing and promotions. He

has hired a Portland marketing firm to help him, but he also spends time traveling around to promote and demonstrate his game.

"I've developed my (hay) business, and now, my business supports the game. It possessed me for about a month."

To play the game itself, the players take turns spinning the roulette wheel, which has four steel balls rolling around it. Eventually, the balls stop in spaces that are marked with a consonant and vowel. This gives the player a total of eight letters in each spin.

Players then try to make the highest scoring word possible from the letters available. There are also "wild vowel" spaces that allow the spinner to choose any vowel, a space where the spinner loses five points and a space where the spinner wins five points. In addition to single letters, there are also spaces with blends such as SH or TH on them.

In the instructions, Aceti gives an example of a round of play: The consonants are R (worth three points), SH (seven points), T (three points), and F

(five points). The vowels, all worth two points, are E, E, A, and O.

The examples of words given in the instructions include FEET (12 points), SHEET (14 points), and SHAFT (17 points). Each player scores only their highest scoring word, and letters may be used only once for every time they appear.

"The game is geared so it can be intriguing for adults. There's more to it than just a board game — it's dynamic," Aceti says. "It has so many features and good elements of a good family game."

He also adds that the game

can teach children to spell better, and he says a representative from the educational service district in Lake County bought some games for the school districts.

Aceti says a local radio station may use the game for an on-the-air promotion, and he says an article about the game has been in the Oregonian. Also, he says, Oregon magazine is planning an article about his game.

The Mingle Word-Roulette game is available at Walden bookstores statewide and in all Endgames stores for \$18.95, or you can order it through the mail for \$21.95.

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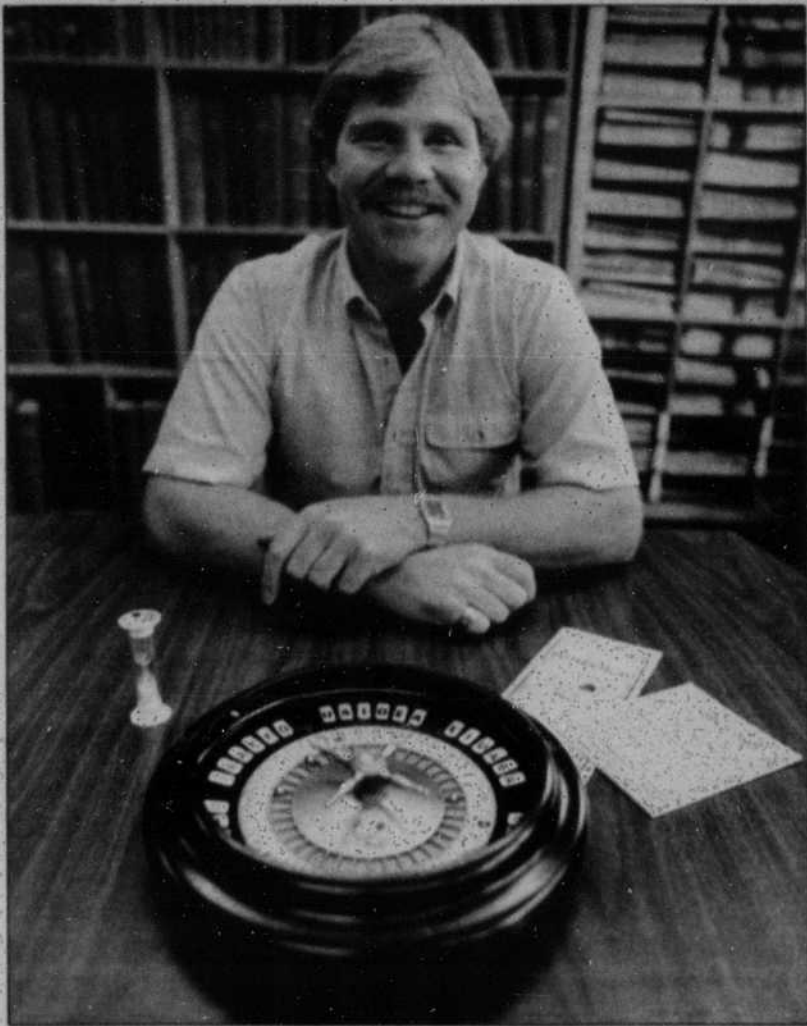


Photo by Jim Marks

Tony Aceti, whose mother worked on the original game before she died of cancer, is hoping his Mingle Word-Roulette game will be a hit.



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