

The Old Lyons Recorder

"Your Local Hometown Paper"

Lyons, Colorado • 75¢



412 High St./P.O. Box 1729 Lyons, CO 80540 Phone: 303-823-6625 -- Fax: 303-823-6633

News

Top Stories

Opinion

Sports

Search Archives

RSS Feed Information

Classifieds

View Classifieds

Search Classifieds

Place Classified

Contact Us

Staff Directory

Engagement Form

Wedding Form

Birth Form

Subscription Information

Local Links

Chamber of Commerce

Lyons Classic Pinball begets Lyons Classic Video

BY STEVE NOVAK



The owners of Lyons Classic Pinball (339 Main Street) have decided to expand. No, not to some new palatial digs atop a skyscraper in Denver, but next door—into a room at Oskar Blues. That expansion is the new Lyons Classic Video (LCV), featuring classic video games of the 1980s.

LCV's modest room is a few steps down from Oskar's lower-level bar. Those steps are painted in '60s dayglo – fluorescent - paint, bright green and orange, pulling one willingly down into a room crammed with video games that're coolly and solely lit by black lights. The eye-bending graphics of black light posters bedecking the walls suck your eyesight their way, at least until your possibly hazy brain finally notices—the games! And what games – the classics of the 1980s, such as the spaceship-shooting Missile Command, the



wriggly and mushrooming targets of Centipede, skippin' alou with Donkey Kong Jr., Battlezone, Frogger, Super Mario Brothers, Galaga, Paperboy, Tempest, Gorf...AARRGGHH! Where's the roll of quarters?

It can remind one - fondly - of beer-hazed days in dark, friendly bars with loud rock and roll playing while you and your sweetie taking turns whizzing around the battlescreen of an early Asteroids games [another classic at Lyons Classic Video], or Tron, the first video game to inspire a movie.

Because guess what? You're in a bar. You can have a beer – or whatever alcoholic libation you desire while you play.

Owners and married couple Kevin and Carole Carroll have delighted customers for over three years now with their classic pinball machines at Lyons Classic Pinball (LCP). Their business began with a collection that started with one machine: Carole bought her husband the pinball classic Kiss for his birthday in 2002. It was the gaming equivalent of heroin for the couple who, slowly but at an increasing pace, bought ever-more pinball machines, before finally realizing their burgeoning dream in March 2003 of opening an arcade containing well-maintained, classic pinball machines from the 1960s through the 2000s. Their home collection includes non-electronic forerunners to electric pinball machines from as far back as the 1930s, including the first game ever to use flippers.

With his passion and dedication to pinball, Kevin grew enthusiastic explaining why he decided to open a video game arcade. "There's a definite segment of 20- and 30-somethings who have more of an affinity for early videos," Kevin said. "The way pinball is to me is what videos are to them."

There are 27 video games at LCV, and two pinball machines "for my pinball customers when I'm not open," Kevin said.

And LCV will help his pinball business. "By no means are we moving away from pinball," Kevin stated. "Because I've taken many of the video games over to LCV, it lets us bring in more classic pinball games, and oddities such as Orbitor 1 and Hercules." (Orbitor 1 is a pin with a strange non-flat, concave and convex playing field that approximates a lunar surface. Hercules is currently being worked on by Kevin; it's a Yugo-sized machine that occupies a bay of the Carrolls' garage, and it's the largest manufactured pinball game in the world.) Carole added, "We used to have 30 pinballs in here; it'll be nearly 40 now that Lyons Classic



Video has opened.”

The Carrolls know their business is now in both pins and videos. “We’ve kept a few video games at LCP,” Carole said, “Baby Pac-Man (combo vid and pin game), Galaga/Ms. Pac-Man combo and an old 70s car racing game called Laguna Racer.”

Customer response to LCV is already positive. “I’ve already seen and heard the reactions these first few days,” Kevin said, “from a simple, ‘Cool,’ to Mom telling her kids, ‘I can beat you on that,’ because Mom used to play it in her youth. Plus, adults can have a beer while playing.”

With Oskar Blues’ bar (and thus, Lyons Classic Video) opening at 11 a.m. and closing at 12 a.m. Sunday through Thursday, and closing at 2 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays, diehard pin and vid heads now have options outside of Lyons Classic Pinball’s normal hours of operation [see bottom for LCP hours]. “[On days] when I’m closed now - Monday through Wednesday - my customers have somewhere to go,” Kevin said. “Plus, if they want a longer night when I am open - I can send ‘em over there [to Lyons Classic Video at Oskar Blues] when I have to close.”

Some of the Carrolls’ loyal customers have noted that, outside of Planet Bluegrass’ music festivals, it could be that Lyons Classic Pinball brings more outsiders to Lyons that spend money in town than any other business. “We’ve had visitors from Kansas, Wyoming and many other states,” Kevin said. “We also get international visitors, from Belgium, Australia, France, Germany, Canada and more. Numerous people have told us they’re staying at hotels in town just to play pinball.”

LCP’s ability to generate business for others in Lyons as well as itself stems in part from its extremely popular, long-running monthly tournament, along with its newly-formed weekly pinball league. The tournament runs the third Thursday of every month - June 15 this month - and is a double-elimination tournament (you have to lose twice to be eliminated). Anyone can show up, pay the \$5 entry fee, and try their skill at beating other players. Players don’t know which machine they’ll compete on until one of the two players chooses from game names in a hat.

The Carrolls worried that, with higher gas prices and long commutes for some, the number of weekly league participants would shrink after its initial run this past spring. Instead, the number of players has increased for the second and upcoming season, from 16 to 20 pinheads. “That’s surprised us,” Kevin said. “Some of the people drive from as far away as Monument and Kansas to play, every week.”

Lyons Classic Video has its own website along with Lyons Classic Pinball, at www.lyonspinball.com. “It’s amazing how many have heard of us through our website,” Kevin said. “When people talk about the best pinball place in the country, we get mentioned. That’s pretty impressive for a place that’s only been around 3 years.”

Now vidheads have their own place in Lyons, just like the pinheads.

Lyons Classic Pinball is opened from 5 to 7 p.m. on Thursdays, 3 to 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 3 to 9 p.m. on Sundays. LCP is closed Monday through Wednesday. For more information, visit the website www.lyonspinball.com, or phone 303-823-6100.

Send us your comments about this article.