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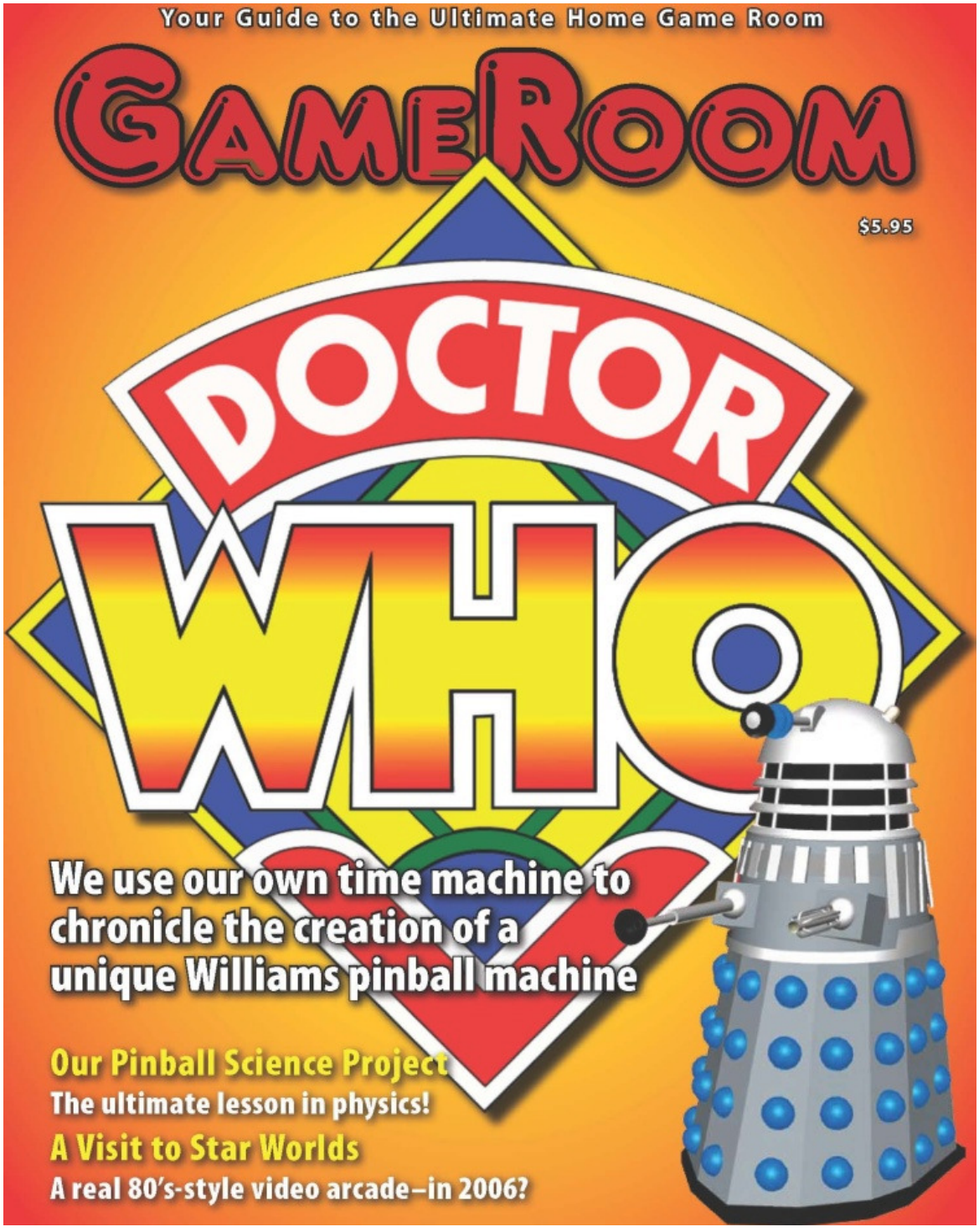

This place may seem like a dream from days long since passed, but in Dekalb, IL the arcade gaming dream lives on, thanks to the dedication of Pat O'Malley. Pat started as an arcade operator more than 20 years ago when he purchased the original Star Worlds in 1985. Since then he has expanded to not only run Star Worlds, but also operate games in other locations throughout Dekalb and the far-western suburbs of Chicago.

Dekalb looks like most any small mid-western farm town, so I was shocked when I drove by and noticed a nondescript looking building that simply said "Star Worlds" on it, along with some arcade-themed decorations covering the door. My first thought was that this was an odd place for a home game room store, so upon arriving home I quickly checked the Internet and, much to my surprise, I discovered that Star Worlds was an honest-to-goodness true 1980's style arcade.

As I am sure most arcade fans would do, I promptly told my wife that we had to go and dragged her out the door the following weekend. She wasn't as excited as I was, but she does enjoy games and so off we went!

Once inside Star Worlds I was met by Pat and shocked that I could get 30 tokens for only $5! Truly this is a gamer's paradise. Even better was the fact that most games were only 1 token—except a few "newer" ones that were 2 tokens, including *Rad Mobile* (1991) and *Radikal Bikers* (1998).

As I began to explore Star Worlds, I set off on a journey back in time. The arcade is divided up into a couple different rooms, newer and more involved games are in the front room, along with pinball tables on one side. In the middle was a room housing several older uWinks that can be also convert into a birthday party room. In the back there was another room chock full of classics like *Pac-Man*, *Burger Time*, *Centipede*, and lesser known games including *Return of the Jedi*, *Atomic Punk*, *Spiker*, and *Slick Shot*.

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In addition to this location, Pat also operates games at various other spots around Dekalb, including a candy shop in the downtown area. This allows him to keep the game selection fresh. I'll most certainly be returning to see what's new and I learned today that Pat has added *Growl* to the collection.

Visiting Star Worlds was a wonderful experience for me and my wife. For the first time, in 15-20 years anyhow, we had a chance to play games like *Track and Field*, *Avalanche* and even *Asteroids* on an actual arcade cabinet, not just through emulation at home.

Playing the real games and not the approximations was truly a thrill and an honor. Enjoying them while eating popcorn and chatting with the owner who has been in the industry since most of these games were new was even more exciting!

For those of us who love classic arcade games, but either can't afford the space or money to build our own home arcades, this is a great opportunity. It also made me realize that while playing games through MAME or a multi-game cabinet at home is fun it is really no replacement for the real thing. I know that I left not only with a renewed appreciation for several games, but some new favorites as well.

Star Worlds is located at 1234 East Lincoln Highway, DeKalb, IL 60115, about an hour west of Chicago. More information, including newest game acquisitions can be found on the website: http://www.starworldsarcade.com

Have a handfull of popcorn and chat with Star Worlds owner Pat O' Malley

A cocktail version of Missle Command

James Hills trys his hand at *Slick Shot*

A lineup of popular favorites