

# Alumnus creates new games

'A' Cone invented the games *Play it Smart*, *Nickle and Dime Pool*

By EMILY BREWER  
NEWS COPY EDITOR

Life may seem like fun and games for one former university student, but being a full-time game inventor is hard work.

"A" Cone left the university in 1976 to become a bartender, a stockbroker, a banker, a horse trainer and a game inventor. It just goes to show that you never can predict where the future will lead.

Out of his Huntersville, N.C. home, Cone runs his Puffin Corporation, which he founded in 1984. His horses live just below him in the basement barn.

Cone formed the corporation with the idea of his first game, *Play It Smart*.

"This game requires a knowledge that the average schooled person should know ... it is a more intellectual version of the ever-popular *Trivial Pursuit*," Cone said.

Cone spent years researching and writing questions for the game, such as, "How do you convert Fahrenheit to Celsius?" and "What does S.O.S. stand for?"

In 1993, *Play It Smart* received national recognition when the *Chicago Tribune* ranked it among the top 10 new games of the year, describing it as "Trivial Pursuit for PhDs."

Cone really took the game to the bank when Rayovac Batteries paid him for the rights to use *Play It Smart* as their slogan for an advertising campaign they were running starring Michael Jordan.

This Rayovac campaign helps in more ways than one: it serves as free advertisement for the game as it runs for 10 years with a big name like Jordan's.

With the money from Rayovac and the success of his first game, Cone began work on his latest game.

He wanted to make a miniature pool table that could be carried around. Put brass coins in the place of balls and remove the stick and you have *Nickle and Dime Pool*. It fits in a backpack and comes with a leather pouch in which to carry the coins.

"I think I've hit the jackpot here," Cone said. "I hope that it will be-

come a staple like checkers."

Cone said that the game is ideal for young and old, guys and girls, is sturdy and durable, portable, simple, and is a scaled down version of an already universal game.

But don't take his word for it. Ask the jurors of the O.J. Simpson trial. Cone sent a copy of the game to Judge Lance Ito to give to the jurors. In their free time they could not watch TV or read the paper, but they could play *Nickle and Dime Pool*. Ito sent Cone a note of appreciation for the kind offer.

"You can only play 'Go Fish' so many times before you throw up," Cone said.

Cone has also sent copies of the game to Danny Thomas' Hospital, St. Jude.

"It's good to take sick kids' minds off their illnesses," Cone said. The Recreational Therapist at Bowman Gray also received a copy for his therapy patients.

*Nickle and Dime Pool* can now be found in every state. Cone sells his games to specialty retailers. Locally, Bocock-Stroud and Sharon Luggage and Gifts have it in stock.

Having only been out on the market for a couple of months, the game has not yet enjoyed great success. It has, however, won a major award. *Toys Magazine* chose *Nickle and*

*Dime Pool* as a finalist in its "Best New Toys of '95" contest.

Cone said that the recognition he has received lately has been hard earned. He warned students of the trials of an entrepreneur.

"You work 24 hours a day, you eat, sleep and drink your business, and sometimes your biggest successes are an accident," he said.

Furthermore, he said the nature of his business really calls for strong advertising.

Cone said he has learned, however, that advertising does not come cheaply and is far out of his price league.

"A six-figure budget is a joke for young entrepreneurs," Cone said.

He may not be able to take out a full page advertisement in the *New York Times* or advertise on television, but Cone uses creative advertising, such as sending complimentary games to coffeehouses.

Cone advises business students to keep in mind three integral things: the product must be of high quality, it must have retail outlets where consumers can buy it and consumers need to know it is out there — advertising is essential.

Cone said he knows what it is like to watch credit cards run to the limit and does not pretend that the road to success has been easy.



Courtesy of 'A' Cone

'A' Cone shows off his invention, the game known as *Play it Smart*.

# Survey

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In the peer group, 34 percent answered A or A- as their average grade overall, 55 percent said B+ or B, and about 11 percent said B- or C+. Both groups had one percent respond to a C or below. "Wake Forest seniors have a higher grade average overall than their peers," Griffith said.

The same was true for the grades Wake Forest students received in their major.

According to the survey, 25 percent of Wake Forest students chose a professional master's degree as the highest degree they hoped to obtain, correlating exactly with the peer group.

The importance of a stable, secure future when considering a career was significantly higher to Wake Forest graduates than to members of the peer group. Wake Forest students also considered availability of jobs significantly

more important than the peer group. On the other hand, the peer group's responses to the importance of creativity and initiative in a job was significantly higher than that of Wake Forest students.

Both groups had the largest percentage answering that medicine was their desired career when entering college. Yet both had business and industry as the greatest percent for their anticipated first job after graduation.

Sixty-four percent of the participating students were female, while 36 percent were male. In the peer group, 56 percent were female, and 44 percent were male.

Wake Forest had a greater percentage of students participating in activities such as volunteer services, study abroad programs, religious services and Greek life, compared to the peer group.

Although the survey showed that Wake Forest had a two percent greater amount of black, non-Hispanic students who responded to the survey, it also showed that one percent of Wake Forest students who answered the survey were Asian or Pacific Islander, compared to the peer group's 12 per-

cent. Similarly, Wake Forest had no Hispanic students respond to the survey, whereas the peer group had four percent.

Also, 25 percent of Wake Forest participants responded that their parental income was \$140,000 or over. The peer group had 22 percent answer this income bracket. Wake Forest had three percent of those surveyed respond their parental income being under \$20,000. The peer group had six percent in this category.

The senior survey is in its 3rd year, which initially began due to a recommendation from the Program Planning Committee.

In January of 1993, they suggested a survey such as this one be given, particularly to seniors.

"The survey allows observers to dig in and see some individual areas that deserve to be looked at," Griffith said. "At least there's a conscious awareness that has taken place among deans, chairs and faculty."

"Another recommendation was to make a more formalized use of the analysis to possibly make changes where appropriate, to know where we're doing well, and where we don't need changes," he said.

# CIT

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The committee recently created a moderated listserv to answer policy questions about the computing elements of the Plan for the Class of 2000. Subscribers to the listserv will receive e-mail responses to their computer queries. According to Rhoda Channing, the director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library and member of the committee, the listserv will be an invaluable communication tool.

"What we have found is that in any time of rapid and profound change, what you have is miscommunication. So we decided that it would be a really good idea if people had a place to ask policy questions to the appropriate people," she said.

The listserv is moderated by Glen Piper, the academic

computing support consultant. When a question is submitted, it is first screened by the moderator before it is sent to those who have subscribed to the list.

If the question is not relevant to the policies regarding the technology project, but is computer related, it can be forwarded to the computer support center or the appropriate person.

Relevant questions and their answers will be distributed to the rest of the list, Channing said.

Another advantage of moderating the list is that the moderator will be able to find the most appropriate source of information to answer the questions, according to Channing.

All students, staff and faculty are invited to subscribe to the listserv.

To subscribe, send a message reading "subscribe p2000" to listserv@wfu.edu. To send messages to the list, simply address them to p2000@wfu.edu.

A telephone hotline has also been set up to answer similar questions. The hotline number is Ext. 2135, and it can only be reached from on campus.

# Officers

From Page 1

campus issues to the Intrafraternity Council," Clark said.

"We need to take a proactive stance to counteract the negative

climate towards Greeks currently on campus," Clark said.

He said he hopes to accomplish this by sponsoring more intellectual activities on campus and cooperating with the Panhellenic Council in order to create a more unified stance on Greek life.

Moore also would like to continue earning the respect of the faculty and administration by having a faculty

appreciation week and holding a faculty lecture series.

The two councils will gather together in the spring to plan and hold Greek Week.

Panhellenic is now in the process of starting Spring Rush. Tuesday the council is holding a scholarship banquet in honor of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority having the most improved overall grade point average.

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