

Carousel Organ.

## Luigi's "Rescued"

Hal O'Roarke

Like many small organ enthusiasts I'm always on the lookout for old postcards, magazines, knickknacks, etc, depicting organ grinders. Recently, while pursuing one of my other interests in life, buying and restoring pinball machines, I attended an auction where people in the amusement business dump their old and excess coin operated equipment. To my surprise among all the other treasures (read junk) there stood two aging "redemption" games named *Luigi's Corner* containing animated organ grinder and monkey figures.



Figure 1. Two *Luigi's Corner* coin-operated games.

I should explain that "redemption" games come in a wide variety of types and are used in arcades to entice

players to demonstrate some skill in order to win tickets later to be redeemed for mostly worthless prizes. *Luigi's Corner* required the player to insert a quarter (or token) in a shooter device and try to make it land in Luigi's hat, his monkey's cup, or other winning locations. To make the game more difficult Luigi is cranking the organ, raising and lowering his hat (the big jackpot award) and the entire organ and figure is moving from side to side. The monkey is also moving side to side to make his cup more difficult to hit.



Figure 2. Luigi and his monkey removed from the case.

Even though I had no idea what I was going to do with them there was no way could let them pass unless the price went to the ridiculous. It didn't, so I was high bidder and prevailed on a friend to haul them back for me. This is the type of equipment those in the business call "whales" and I could not even fit one in my pick-up.

The games had been pretty well cannibalized for generic parts and their life as commercial equipment was in the past. The figures are essentially complete and mostly work, but require someone to love them and spend some time on restoration. They were rather easily extracted as a unit from the cabinets (which are now in the dump) and await their fate in my garage along with all the other "future" projects. Hopefully someday you will see Luigi reincarnated in a rally, museum, or collection near you.

Hal O'Roarke not only collects coin-operated equipment but is also an organ grinder who supplies many collectors with 20-note rolls.