

Today's Business



Hybrid Vendor Molds Figures as You Watch

BY WILLIAM B. STYLES

A wild-looking device making its appearance in Greater Cincinnati is a juke box, vending machine and pinball hybrid called a Mold-A-Rama that combines the industrial process of injection molding with a Space Age come-on.

For a quarter in the coin slot, Mold-A-Rama produces from liquid plastic a small figure, roughly 5 inches long, of almost any subject, be it an ape, a bear, a skull, a model of the building or sports arena in which the machine is placed, or even a bust of President Kennedy, depending upon the dies that are used.

There is only one die to a machine.

THE PROCESS goes on right before your eyes under a dome—plastic, of course — set on a hefty base with a board full of flashing lights above that give the whole thing a juke box appearance.

There are plenty of pressure dials to watch in addition to the rubber hoses and moving parts of the device itself.

And just to add a dramatic flavor, there's a series of signs that flash on the headboard as the machine gets into gear, ending with a green "all systems go." There also is a set of countdown lights that tick off the 30 seconds it takes the machine to manufacture its product.

Eventually, all the machines will be supplied with a double-track sound tape that will periodically explain to passersby what the machine is all about and, when the coin is inserted, add a few space age sound effects.

THIS DEVICE made its first public appearance at the Seattle World's Fair this summer.

It is the product of several companies including Lion Manufacturing Corp., of Chicago, producer of the unit, Catching Engineering Co., Brookfield, Ill., designer of the injection molding



MACHINE MOLDS WHILE YOU WAIT

... curios today, dishes, clothes, combs tomorrow

device, and Automatic Retailers of America Inc., which has distribution and leasing rights under a subsidiary, Mold-A-Rama Inc., Los Angeles.

Joe Concilla, University of Cincinnati fullback on the Sid Gillman football teams of 1952-3 and 4, is district manager here for Mold-A-Rama.

Since August he has placed Mold-A-Rama units in about 15 locations including Greater Cincinnati Airport, Cincinnati Gardens, Kenwood Plaza, and a number of area bowling alleys and discount houses.

The company is working on production of special molds that will be convenient of the particular location of

each machine — such as a zoo, amusement park or public building — as well as molds for more practical and functional items.

All this may sound like a silly gadget out of a penny arcade, but Automatic Retailers is deadly serious about Mold-A-Rama's future.

With batteries of such machines in neighborhood store units, much like laundromats, the company envisions every man as his own plastic goods manufacturer. If he needs a set of dishes, he can just drop by, put the proper coins in the proper machines and make himself some.

Or he can make other useful things, even clothing, Concilla says.