

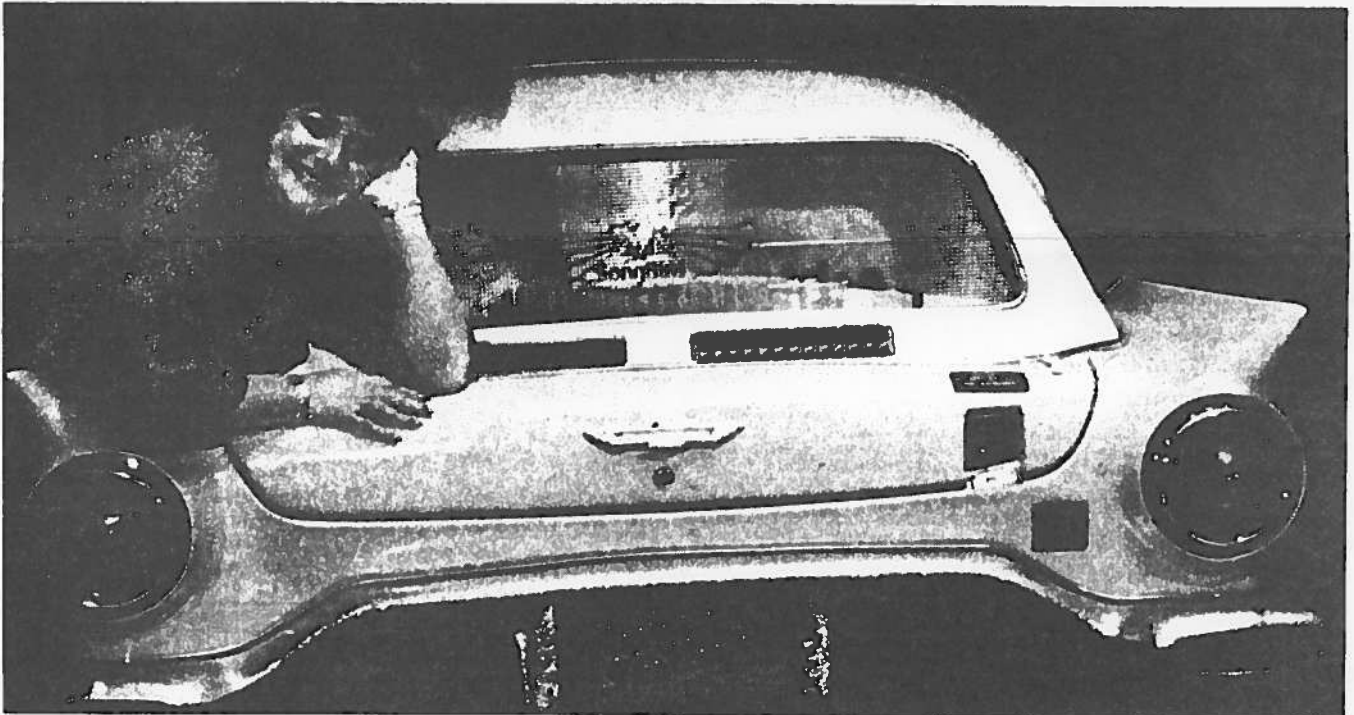
# FULL PAGE (13 3/4" x 20 3/4") 4 COLOR (FRONT PAGE SECTION)

INSIDE:  Billboard  
 Nite beat  
 Album review  
**C**  
Lois Town  
dimensions editor 894-9636

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## dimensions



Shelley Hayward, who with her husband Greg owns Madame Shelley's tavern on Washington Avenue, poses with Bay City's favorite jukebox.

TIM FITZGERALD ■ TIMES PHOTO

# THE BEST

## Jukebox In Town

By JASON DEAN  
Special to The Times

The battle for bragging rights to the best jukebox in Bay County has been won by a car. Part of a car, actually.

In ballots returned to the Times, readers picked the pink 1957 T-bird replica spinning tunes at Madame Shelley's on Washington Avenue. The race wasn't even close, as the winner sped away with roughly three-quarters of the more than 200 votes.

Madame Shelley's has the only jukebox in town that looks as if it were backed through the wall from the alley. With its authentic body, flashing taillights and song selection contained in the rear window, the machine taxis willing patrons down rock-and-roll memory lane, with optional detours into the contemporary sounds of Bon Jovi or Samantha Fox.

The car's ignition fires up and the engine revs before peeling into the first song a customer plays. About the only thing missing is a trail of exhaust smoke and the smell of burning rubber.

Popular vote was essentially a three-way race with Madame Shelley's taking the blue ribbon, O Hare's Bar on Midland Street taking second and Bishop's Inn on South

Farragut Street placing third.

Back when today's "oldies" were hits, the jukebox was merely an automatic record player, systematically spinning selections from a stack of 45s. If you looked between the song tags, you could see the mechanical parts' less-than-fluid movements.

But as music progresses, the machines that play the music have been equipped with better sound systems and have become more complex. There are a handful of establishments in Bay County with jukeboxes that play compact discs as well as 45s.

But one of the most high-tech is at Bishop's Inn, where song selections are accompanied by videos on three television screens throughout the tavern.

Because of its diversity of music, the number of different selections (more than 700) and the audio-visual aspect, Bishop's Inn is the Critic's Choice among music machines.

American Amusement, an amusement and vending company in Bay City, provided the jukeboxes for Madame Shelley's and Bishop's Inn. Company president John Roszatycki said both machines are the only models of their kind in Michigan.

Both taverns have had their jukeboxes

for about two months and the owners have noticed positive response from patrons.

Gina Mersdorf, manager at Madame Shelley's, said many people have stopped in curious to see the tune-playing car-in-a-bar.

A computer screen provides song listings for the state-of-the-art video box at Bishop's Inn. A song roster for music categories such as dance, jazz, rock and oldies appears at the push of the appropriate button.

The cost per song is expensive (50 cents for one song, a dollar for three and \$2 for seven), but it's worth it.

Owner Renie Wyzgowski said the video box has attracted a huge response.

The machine's diverse selection is custom-made for the hardest or easiest to please.

For those who haven't gotten their recommended daily allowance of Poison, Whitesnake, Rick Astley or other radio-ruling pop acts, the video box provides ample nourishment.

And for those who don't necessarily want to choose from a group of songs that they didn't like even before they were over-played, there are plenty of alternative selections in several music categories that

won't be found on any other jukebox in the area.

As far as atmosphere is concerned among the top three finishers, Madame Shelley's has probably benefited the most. The T-bird is an eye-catcher but still maintains a nostalgic feeling from its corner in the establishment.

The jukebox at O Hare's, a facsimile of a Wurlitzer Model 1015 from the 1940s, adds a decorative flair to the surroundings. It also contains an exceptional offering of oldies.

The only problem with the video box at Bishop's Inn is that it's slightly overwhelming. If some stranger deposits \$5 to demonstrate his poor taste in music, I not only have to hear it (they do play it loud), but I can hardly move without seeing the visual accompaniment broadcast on one of the strategically placed video screens.

While most of those who sent ballots to The Times nominated jukeboxes in bars, two gentlemen took it upon themselves to nominate the jukeboxes in their own home for the survey.

Harold Church of Silverwood got his 1930s-era jukebox ten years ago after answering an ad in the paper. Church

See JUKEBOX, 5C

## JUKEBOX

Continued from 1C

explained that the jukebox used to be in a music store in Vassar. When the store burned down, the machine slid on its back into the basement relatively unharmed.

"I've heard from various auctioneers and collectors that there are only three like it left in the U.S.," he said.

Bay City resident Fred Nowak got his 1965 Rockola Model 834 nearly five years ago. Nowak indicated the fact that every selection is a favorite and the price is right (free) contributed to his decision to vote for his box.

"It's got a personality of its own," he said. Two establishments that received a few votes

are also worth mentioning.

The Green Hut on Columbus Avenue has a jukebox that features CDs and singles. Dedicated mostly to oldies, the box offers more than 300 selections, although in contrast to Bishop's Inn, it could use an extra notch or two of increased volume.

Then there's Hulda's Place on Michigan Avenue. Hulda's got a vote from a Bay City couple who said they play the dated tunes for hysterical laughs because they're so lousy.

Classics like "Cuando, Cuando, Cuando" and "The Music Box Dancer" are sprinkled in with crooners like Patsy Cline, Dean Martin and Tiffany. There's got to be a theme for a new K-tel album in there somewhere.