

Press-Gazette

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2000
SERVING AN ALL-AMERICA CITY

Board game creator leans on local help

By TERRY ANDERSON
PRESS-GAZETTE

Most of us would think of Music Mayhem as a game. But to creator Bill Solboe, it's a dream come true. And to a crew at N.E.W. Curative Rehabilitation, it's an opportunity for self-sufficiency.

Next weekend, Solboe, a Green Bay native and West High School graduate, is taking his board game to the American International Toy Fair 2000 in New York City.

The event is billed as the world's biggest toy and game exposition with more than 2,000 exhibitors from 25 countries. They will showcase products such as dolls, action figures, games, puzzles, bicycles, cars, trucks, trains, puppets, plush, computer software and video games.

"I'm in the big time now," Solboe said. "It's a show where all the buyers from games stores and department stores come. It's THE place for anyone interested in games and toys."

Music Mayhem is a musical game that Solboe, 38, created 15 years ago to kill time during road trips with his college pals.

Each player takes a turn as a deejay, playing songs that others try to identify. Players get points for correct answers. The first to reach 11 is the winner.

Solboe began creating a prototype 10 years ago, but he soon faced a roadblock: It would cost a fortune to get the rights to all the music needed for the game.

"One day, I was standing in The Exclusive Company and I

Where to find the game

- University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Campus Bookstore
- The Exclusive Company, Green Bay, Milwaukee, Oshkosh
- Winston's Games, Navy Pier, Chicago, Ill.

noticed the growing number of music compilations. Suddenly, the light bulb went on inside my head — I don't have to provide music for the game, they can bring their own."

That also means that the game can be played with any type of music — rock, country, gospel, children's or goldies.

It's only fitting that when the \$35 game was introduced during the last holiday season, Solboe sold about 300 copies, most at The Exclusive Company stores.

As for packaging, Solboe turned to another local source.

"I was looking for a quality place to assemble and package the game," he said. "I found that place to be Sheltered Industries (a division of N.E.W. Curative Rehabilitation). Not only does Sheltered do good work, but they also help people with disabilities."

So far, Sheltered Industries has helped Solboe assemble several thousand copies of the game.

"We're having lots of fun with it," said spokeswoman

Please see **Game, E-2**



Ken Wesely/Press-Gazette
Bill Solboe is the creator of Music Mayhem, a musical board game that he will present at the American International Toy Fair 2000 in New York City.

Game/Confidence, self-esteem increase

From D-1

Kristin Van Epern, "Currently, we have four or five clients gluing spinners, putting together parts packets and shrink-wrapping the boxes."

Van Epern said the center's goal is to provide a work atmosphere for people with "more challenging disabilities."

The work not only helps N.E.W. Curative clients earn money so they can live independently, it also builds self-respect.

"Work is something we often take for granted. But it's so important to self-esteem and confidence," Van Epern said. "It helps you deal with people beyond your immediate family, people you may

not always like. It means having to be accountable and have to be on time."

Solboe, who is finishing graduate studies to become a school counselor, said he now has a greater respect for people who start their own businesses: people who see an idea through to reality — win or lose.

"The game is a game. But there's a lot of work behind it that I'm really coming to appreciate," he said.