



# The Book of Huish

*Personal & Biz History of FEC Pioneers Told in Beautiful Family Volume*

It's often said that when a fire, flood or other natural disaster is about to hit someone's home, one of the few things they make sure to take before running out the door is the family photo album.

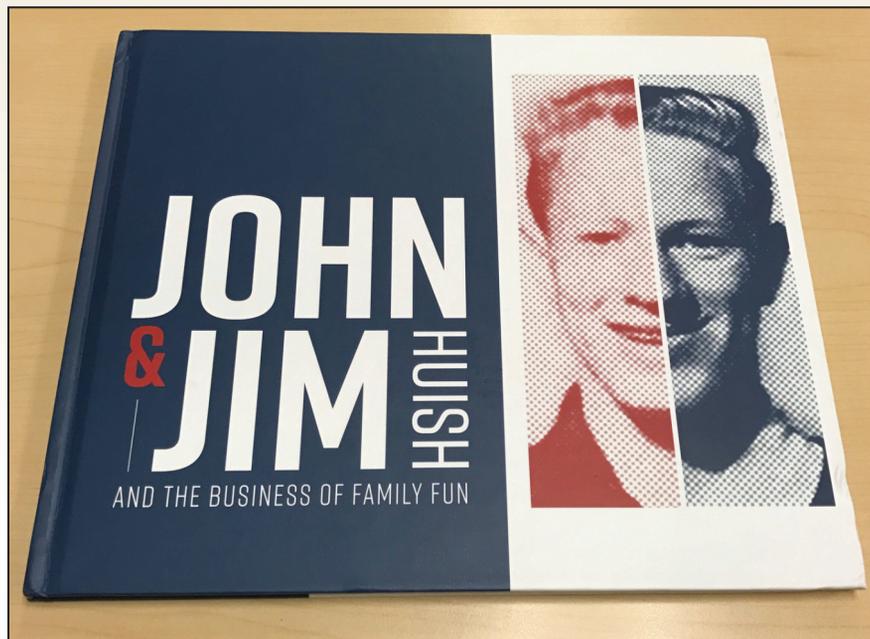
Thankfully, nothing of the sort has threatened the Poway, Calif. home of John Huish. But if it ever did, he's got the family story, combined with the business history of the entertainment centers he and his identical twin brother Jim created, all wrapped up in a specially-produced 72-page "coffee table book" which could serve as the Magna Carta for this, one of the truly royal families in the amusement industry.

It's entitled "John & Jim Huish and the Business of Family Fun."

John commissioned the Aguiar Design Co. to produce this legacy of the Huish Family Fun Centers and the central parts he and Jim played in the saga. The "words" were supplied by John by his own hand and in interviews, while the "music" (the lavish spread of photos) also came from his store of memorabilia along with help from others in the extended Huish family; John has ten children, Jim four.

Born May 28, 1935, the book traces the twins' lives from their early days in Oakland, Calif., through scouting, school baseball, the Army (they served two years together in France), followed by college at Brigham Young University, marriage and their very first attraction. . . an 18-hole miniature golf course in Springville, Utah.

In the book, John says that very first place cost them \$1,500 to build back in 1957. Their second mini-golf course went up a year later in Provo, Utah, then their first in Southern California (La Mesa) in 1961, and so on until over a dozen Huish Brothers courses (sport-



**A true testament to FEC pioneers,** this pictorial saga of the Huish twins follows John and Jim from birth all the way through to induction into the IAAPA Hall of Fame and beyond. Being a family book, only 25 copies were produced.

ing a suitable complement of amusement games) were established out West.

Today, the Huish Family Fun Centers organization owns and runs nine places including their



**In the mid-'50s,** the twins put in two years of active Army service in France and enjoyed touring the Old World in their off time. After service, it was off to college at BYU.



**Their very first attraction** was 18-holes of mini-golf they built in Springfield, Utah on a lot they rented for \$50 a month. Construction began on June 3, 1957. Though Jim designed the course while John spearheaded the business side, they usually worked together as a team.

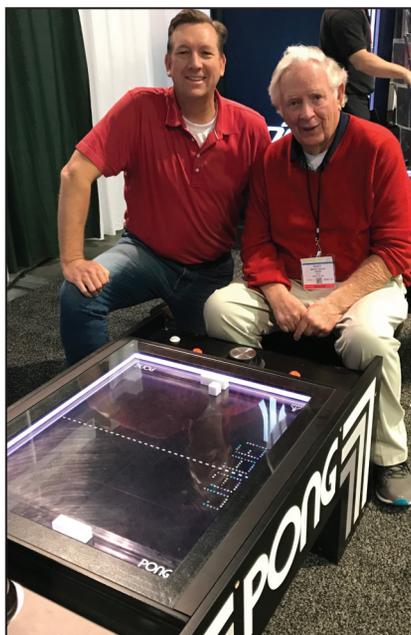
Bullwinkle's restaurants and two water parks (one in Utah, the other Nevada).

While they don't run any coin-op games in the water parks, they certainly do in the FECs (which are mostly in California). In fact, their Tukwila, Wash. facility, which also serves more or less as the organization's headquarters, offers over 150 amusement machines all by itself. John estimates that around 30% of overall gross income stems from coin-op. "We do very well with the amusement games," he advises.

The other 70% of the company's income has derived from bumper boats, go-karts (which they actually built themselves at one time), bumper cars, laser tag, other FEC attractions as well as food service. John figures the organization has given over 100,000 teenagers full or part time work over the years. The number of people they've entertained and/or fed is incalculable.

Nothing is "all roses," as the book reports that on Feb. 29, 1984, Jim

Huish was tragically killed in a construction accident at their Fountain Valley, Calif., site. John, not only a



**Still active:** John Huish, 82 years old and in semi-retirement, did the recent Amusement Expo in Las Vegas with his son Scott. Here they try out the UNIS sitdown Pong table.

## operator profile



**In the mid-'80s**, the Huish twins opened Bullwinkle's restaurants at both Fountain Valley and Irvine, Calif., parks. Here their company mascot shows us the menu.

life-long partner but an identical twin, was clearly devastated and it took a long while before life's brighter lights turned back on for him.

One of those bright lights came along in 2013 when Jim and John Huish were inducted into IAAPA's Hall of Fame. They are one of two sets of brothers so honored by the international organization. (The others being Walt and Roy Disney.) Along with the honor came lifetime membership in the IAAPA group.

Today, John still serves as president at the age of 82, though only works four or five hours a day in what he calls "semi-retirement." Seven of their offspring work in the business, and this is extremely important to him. "Family was of primary concern for both Jim and me. Their support and presence provided purpose for everything we have done," John declared.

Quite a number of Huish friends in the business would surely want to buy a copy of the book, but as mentioned, there was an extremely limited print run, it being a "family affair." As expected, the printed legacy was dedicated by John to his late brother.

Wrote John at the close: "As identical twins, we were connected and mimicked one another mentally, emotionally, creatively and physically. . . though Jim was more creative and I was more inclined toward the business side. But in the final analysis, what went for Jim, went for me."

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