

MOLDVILLE.com

Experience the souvenir fun of the 60s & 70s again, for the first time...

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Club-A-Rama Week 9:

Eldin Irwin's SNOWMAN

1980s



The SNOWMAN is one of a series of iconic mold figures that were added to the historical record of the machines in the early to mid 1980s by one of the first independent operators who bought a couple hundred of the original machines directly from ARA Services (who owned the original MOLD-A-RAMA, Inc. of Los Angeles) around 1967. ELDIN IRWIN, one of four individuals who purchased all machines from ARA Services, operated his machines under the trade name **MOLD A MATIC**. Eldin remained friends with, and often spoke to, the president of the original MOLD-A-RAMA, Inc. of Los Angeles (Ben S. O'Dorisio).



This is ELDIN IRWIN of MOLD A MATIC, on his route at GRAUMAN's CHINESE THEATRE in Hollywood, in the 1980s. He is, no doubt, showing off the new look he had created at the time for his machines, with a fiberglass hood, and external lights added in the upper left and right corners in front of the plexiglass. These external lights were retrofitted onto many of Eldin's mold machines, and indeed were in place on the MOLDVILLE machine when it arrived at my garage. (I have since removed the after-market lights in favor of its original vintage look.)

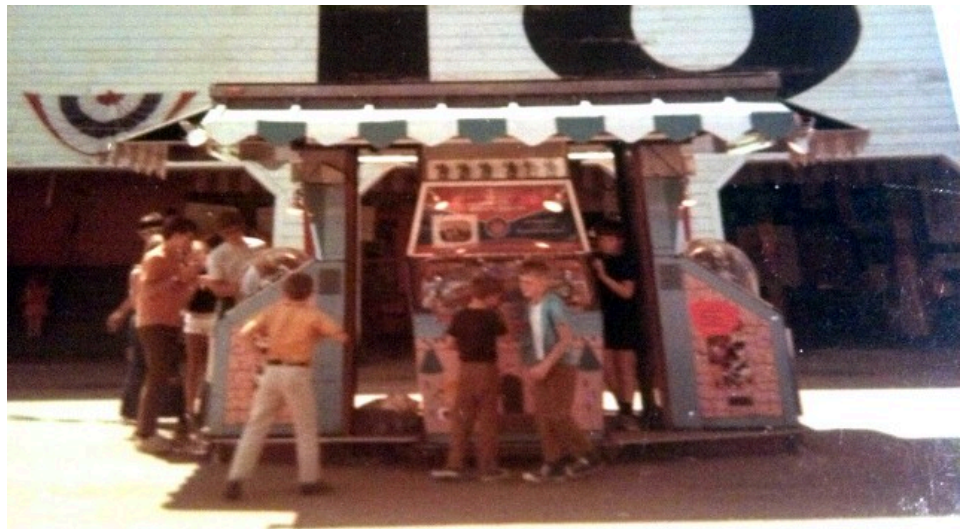


The story of the SNOWMAN moldset has it that Eldin started with a wax candle in designing the master sculpture, then he went on from there. Eldin sculpted his own masters as he was a trained tool and die maker. Shown above are the original plaster MASTERS of just some of the figures sculpted and made by ELDIN IRWIN in the 1980s (standing ANGEL, large REINDEER, and SNOWMAN.) Other moldsets that Eldin designed (I'm sure there are more) include the KANGAROO, BENGAL TIGER, CLOWN, PANDA, BEN FRANKLIN, SANTA, MUDDY THE MUDHEN, SPACE SHUTTLE ORBITING EARTH, CARDINAL and PUMPKIN. Pictured below are Eldin's original sculptures for MUDDY THE MUDHEN, PANDA, and his SPACE SHUTTLE ORBITING EARTH.



Though MOLDVILLE.com's inventory of original moldsets is concentrated in the earliest designs from MOLD-A-RAMA, Inc. of Los Angeles, many of ELDIN IRWIN's designs are among the very best, and so of course we have quite a few of his moldsets in our garage. The SNOWMAN is currently the only ELDIN IRWIN designed mold scheduled for reissue in the CLUB-A-RAMA (though you never know - we have at least 5 more of Eldin's moldsets in our inventory...).





ELDIN IRWIN, with the help of his eldest son TOM IRWIN, in the early 1970s built two trailers with four machines on each, and traveled around the mid-west (mostly Ohio, Michigan, and even Kentucky and Tennessee) from fair to fair in the 70s and 80s. The MOLDVILLE machine making your figures each week actually IS one of these machines pictured above and below, transported on the custom trailers. The MOLDVILLE machine that made this week's SNOWMAN (and all weeks figures actually) was last used on the fair route in 1976, and then it sat unused for 35 years, until it was recently brought back to life just for the Club-A-Rama!

(Note the external flood lights added to the upper left and right corners of the plexiglass on the machines in all the fair photos.)

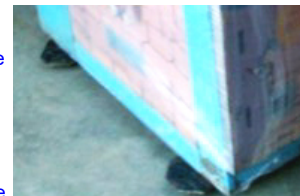


1972



1976 OHIO STATE FAIR

Eldin Irwin modified these machines to include four steel angles welded onto the bottom corners for mounting to the steel frame of the trailers for secure transport. The original MOLDVILLE machine has these four steel angles, making its provenance unquestionable. The MOLD machines were winched on the flat bed trailer and secured for transport from fair to fair, until one of the machines clipped a bridge during transport and hung upside down for hours! That was the end of the era of Eldin Irwin's traveling around from fair to fair. The actual MOLDVILLE machine, pictured here at the Ohio State Fair in 1976, was never operated again (it was found with its 1976 Ohio vending permit still on it), until 35 years later to create the CLUB-A-RAMA!



These fair machines also included another improvement invented by Eldin: the external wax supply hopper. It is the rectangular box including a clear display shelf that sits on top of the back of the machine. MOLDVILLE has one of these original external hoppers (shown below, without its cover on), but it has not yet been restored. Check out the vintage MICKEY MOUSE figures, displayed in the clear display shelf back in the 1970s and not touched since, that melted into a puddle in the bottom of the display window while it sat for decades in a storage barn.





This is the garage where ELDIN IRWIN stored his mold machines in the early 1980s that were not on location. There were probably 15 more machines inside this garage.



ELDIN IRWIN

1923-2001

As a measure of the legacy left by ELDIN IRWIN, three of Eldin's five children followed him into the MOLD A MATIC business.

Disclaimers: The color and/or exact condition of the MOLD you get in the CLUB-A-RAMA may or may not be as shown. Not for children under 3.

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If YOU would like to own this very moldset (and perhaps even include a fully operating MOLDVILLE machine to go with it) so you can reissue your own souvenirs from 50 years ago, please email MoldvilleMachine@gmail.com TODAY - before someone else beats you to it!

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