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Club-A-Rama Week 39:

Political DONKEY

1964



This week we make what I originally thought was a figure that looked much like the Donkey from SHREK (though made decades earlier.) But after asking my usual knowledgeable sources and operators about where it might have been originally used, I got the usual mentions of zoos, etc. But also one former operator answered that "I know the DONKEY was used in political years & zoos, etc." Upon hearing that I instantly referenced my exclusive compilation of moldset numbers (which has been invaluable in dating these moldsets). Guess what other figure was made at exactly the same time as the DONKEY - the LARGE ELEPHANT!! The DONKEY is numbered 1135 and the LARGE ELEPHANT is numbered 1136. I said "I'll be damned!" That's it! The original use of the DONKEY (and the LARGE ELEPHANT) were for POLITICAL purposes!

The 1964 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION took place in the COW PALACE in SAN FRANCISCO, CA, July 13-16. (Of note was the Keynote speaker at that convention: RONALD REAGAN, who officially became a Republican during that election, and which is believed to be the start of his political career.)

The 1964 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION took place in the ATLANTIC CITY CONVENTION CENTER in ATLANTIC CITY, NJ. Attorney General ROBERT F. KENNEDY introduced a short film in honor of his assassinated brother, after which the delegates erupted in 22 minutes of uninterrupted applause.

SAN FRANCISCO and ATLANTIC CITY both had numerous MOLD-A-RAMA machines in place, making the possibility of their conversion for use as DONKEY and LARGE ELEPHANT machines at least while conventioners were in town (though this is total conjecture on my part.) SO, my bet is that the original use of the DONKEY was in ATLANTIC CITY during the 1964 Democratic National Convention, and that the original use of the LARGE ELEPHANT was in SAN FRANCISCO during the 1964 Republican National Convention.

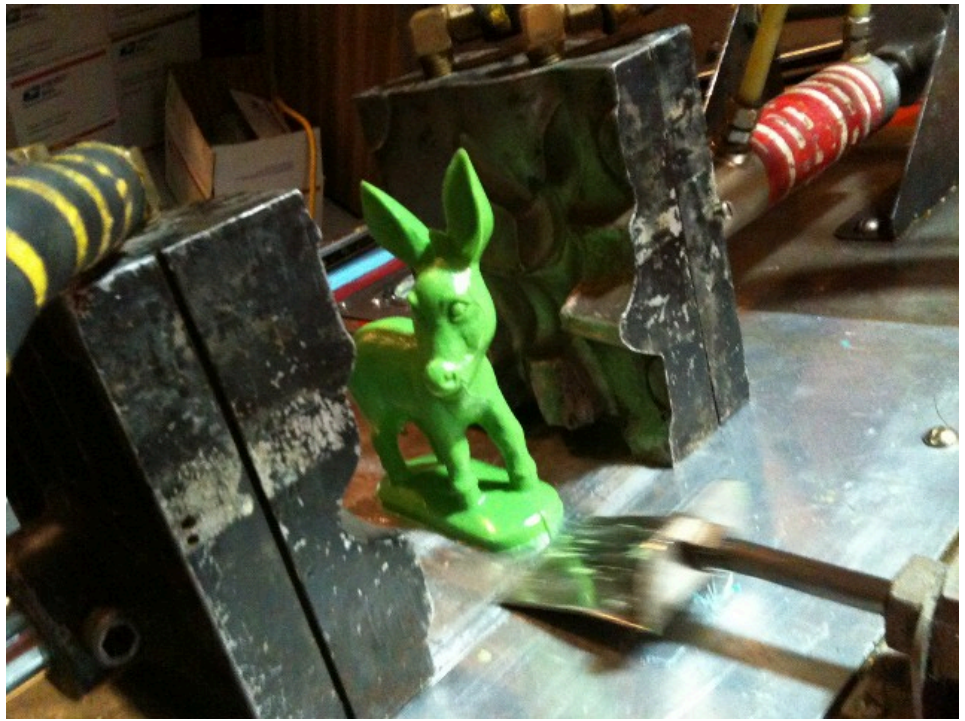


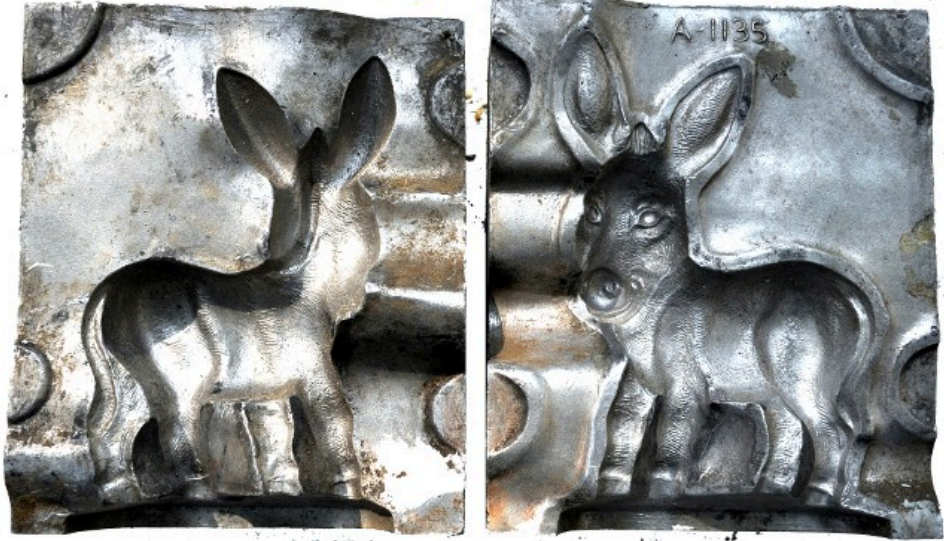
San Antonio, Texas, c1980, courtesy Gary Hunt, during the 50c era. Sign reads "ENGRAVED SOUVENIR BIOLOGICAL GARDENS."

Gary remembers MOLD-A-RAMA machines being at the 1968 HEMISFAIR in San Antonio, TX.

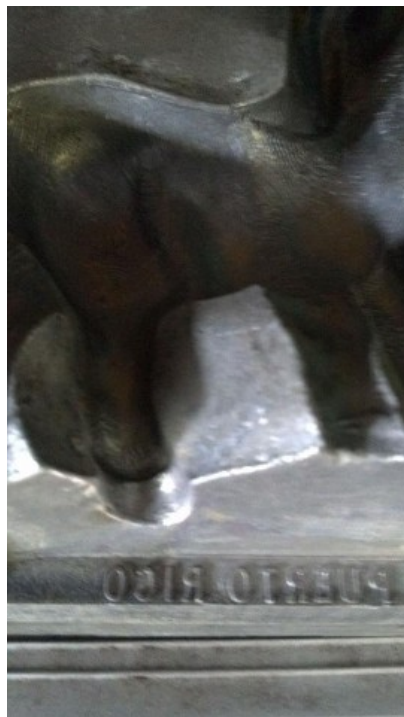


Above are two different (yet similar) donkeys by the JH MILLER MFG CO. made c1957. The difference in the underside evidencing different developmental stages of the Mold-A-Rama machine is quite fascinating to me.





The **DONKEY** moldset dates to very early 1964, and was made at exactly the same time as the **LARGE ELEPHANT** (based on numbering).



There are quite a few original **DONKEY** moldsets (as well as a few original large **ELEPHANT** moldsets.) One interesting engraving on one of the surviving **DONKEY** moldsets says "PUERTO RICO" on the front and "EL SAFARI" on the rear. Another says "WORLD OF MINIATURE HORSES."

There's a coin slot indent on the donkey's back (though it doesn't have the usual "CUT OUT" lettering within the slot.)



Politics would be much better off if the DONKEY and ELEPHANT spent more time kissing and less time arguing . . .

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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