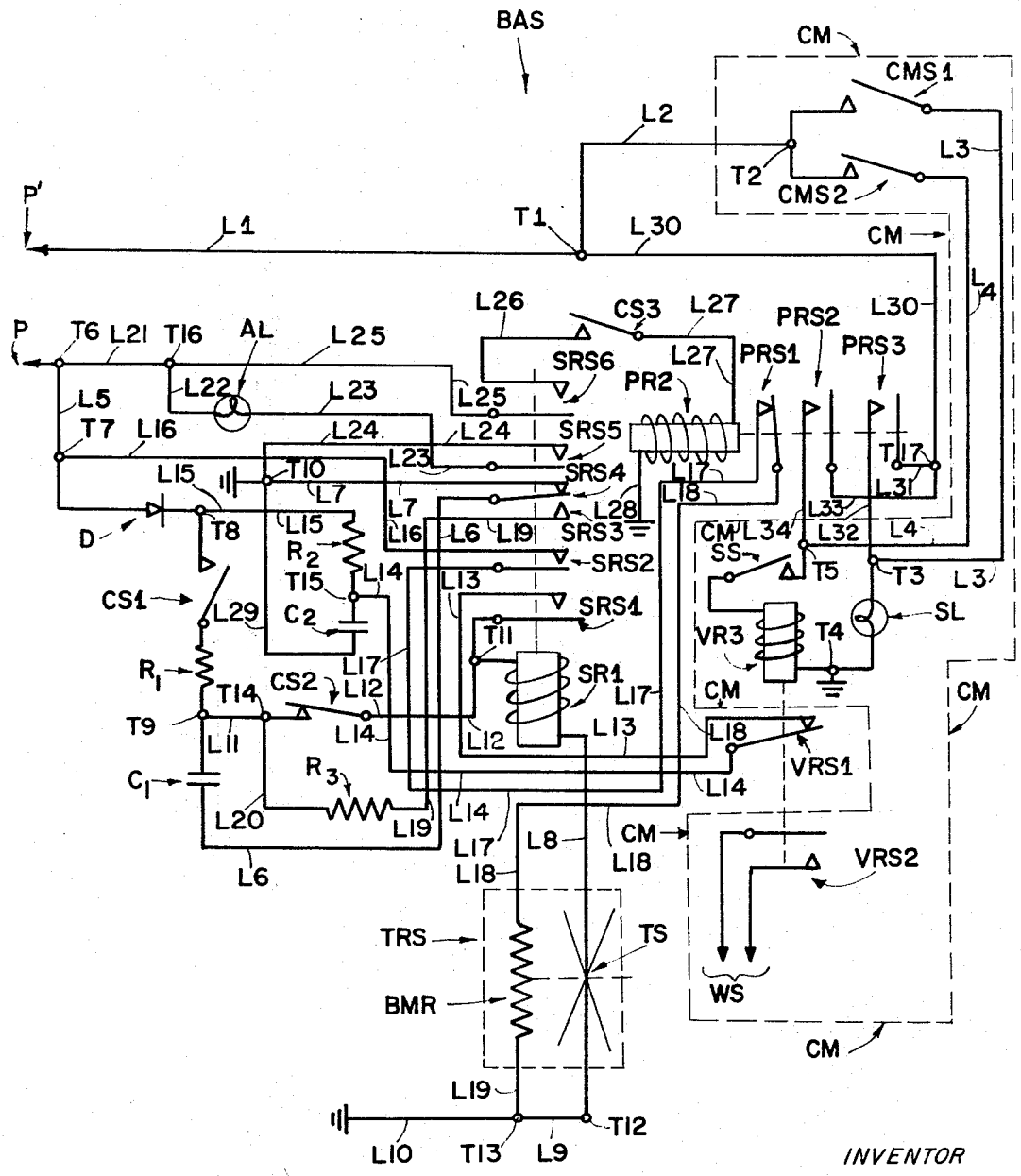
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BONUS AWARD SYSTEM FOR VENDING MACHINES

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BONUS AWARD SYSTEM FOR VENDING MACHINES

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This invention relates to a bonus award system for a vending installation and more particularly to a bonus award system especially designed for use in vending installations (such as a coin-operated automatic phonograph) and adapted to afford a customer an opportunity to purchase, under certain predetermined conditions, a selection available from the vending installation as a bargain priced award.

As is well known, automated vending installations have become a significant factor in retail merchandising of articles (e.g., candy bars) and of services (e.g., the playing of recorded music). However, a disadvantage of such installations has been their relative inflexibility for utilizing proven merchandising techniques based upon award and bargain concepts. To an extent, bargain merchandising has been used in the vending business (as, for example, by offering a single selection record play for ten cents and three single selection record plays for twenty-five cents in a coin-operated automatic phonograph), and such use has been highly successful.

In addition, a copending United States patent application, Scan Award System, Serial No. 381,715, filed July 10, 1964, in the name of Herman G. Jensen and Robert Kapoun, discloses a system suitable for utilization in an automated vending installation and adapted to vend award selections under certain predetermined conditions. The preferred embodiment of the system described in the said copending patent application is a coin-operated automatic phonograph installation in which a customer, after purchase of an ordinary record selection at a regular price, is given an opportunity to purchase a predetermined one of a series of album award selections at a bargain price. The available album award selection is determined by scan means which normally scans a series of album award selections and which, in response to the ordinary purchase, ultimately conditions the award of a predetermined (although apparently random) one of the series of album award selections.

While in practice the use of such a scan award system has proven to be highly successful, one inherent limitation thereof is the lack of customer choice as to the particular award selection that is available for purchase at a bargain price. Since the predetermined available award selection may be a selection which the customer does not desire to purchase (even at a bargain price), customer acceptance of the bargain priced award is not maximized. Moreover, the circuitry necessary to incorporate the described scan award system into an automatic phonograph installation is relatively complex and, as such, can be employed only in connection with main phonograph installations (i.e., the system cannot normally be utilized in remote or satellite stations).

In accordance with the present invention, a bonus award system, which is suitable for use in a vending installation and which permits maximum effective use of bargain and award concepts, is provided. The bonus award system is adapted, upon completion of a regular sale of a vendible selection, to permit a customer to purchase, within a predetermined time, a selection available from the installation as a bargain priced award. Briefly, the bonus award system comprises: first system conditioning means adapted, in response to the completion of

a regular sale of a vendible selection, to condition the system for an award sale of a vendible selection; credit responsive means adapted for activation upon the establishment of award credit; second system conditioning means adapted, in response to activation of the credit responsive means while the system is conditioned for an award sale, to condition the system for customer designation of an award selection; designation responsive means adapted for activation upon customer designation of an award selection; and vend means adapted to cause the designated selection to be vended as an award upon activation of the designation means while the system is conditioned for award selection designation.

A primary object of the present invention is to provide a bonus award system for a vending installation adapted to permit a customer, after the completion of a regular sale of a vendible selection, to purchase, within a predetermined time and as an award selection, an available vendible selection of his choice.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a bonus award system of the character described wherein the award selection is available to the customer at a bargain price.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a new and unique system for utilizing bargain and award concepts in connection with vending installation merchandising.

A still further object is to provide a system of the character described that is easy to fabricate, relatively simple to incorporate in standard automatic vending installations, and which is so compact that it can be successfully employed in vending installations embodying a central or main vending unit and a plurality of remote vending stations.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a system for utilizing bargain and award concepts in a coin-operated automatic phonograph installation which, during the rendition of a purchased award selection, does not impair the normal functioning of the system (i.e., regular purchases may be made), in order that the income of the system may be maximized.

These and other objects, advantages, and features of the subject invention will hereinafter appear, and for purposes of illustration, but not of limitation, an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is shown in the accompanying drawing, which is a schematic circuit diagram of an exemplary bonus award system produced in accordance with the subject invention.

In a preferred embodiment, the bonus award system of the present invention physically embodies certain electromechanical elements which are employed in combination with the existing credit mechanism of a vending installation. For example, where the bonus award system is to be utilized in a coin-operated automatic phonograph vending installation, the bonus award system elements may be employed in conjunction with a credit mechanism such as that described and claimed in Kiefer, et. al., United States Patent No. 3,156,339, patented November 10, 1964.

In operation, the elements of the bonus award system simply serve to modify the credit mechanism insofar as is necessary to make an award selection available to the customer for a predetermined limited time following the completion of a regular purchase. Moreover, the elements of the bonus award system only impair the normal operation of the vending installation during the predetermined limited time period when the bargain purchase is available to the customer. After a customer has purchased an award selection, the installation is restored to its normal operative mode and other customers may make regular purchases. Thus, the opportunity

for maximization of income from the vending installation due to "override" (i.e., the playing of a given popular selection once only in response to several different customers depositing the purchase price and designating the given selection) is increased.

The preferred environment for the system of the present invention is a coin-operated automatic phonograph vending installation, and the embodiment described herein is illustrative of the system of the present invention in such an environment. However, the system can easily be employed in any vending installation.

A coin-operated automatic phonograph vending installation typically offers a relatively large number (e.g., 50) of selections. In making a regular purchase, the customer designates one of the available selections. In accordance with the present invention, the customer is given an opportunity, after completion of a sale of a selection at a regular price, to purchase a selection of his own choice at a bargain price. If the phonograph vending installation offers album selections as well as single play selections, the system may be arranged to afford a customer, in response to a regular purchase of a single play selection, an opportunity to purchase an album selection at a bargain price. Of course, as will be obvious to one skilled in the art, the system could also be arranged so that both single play and album selections are available for bargain purchase.

With reference to the drawing, the circuitry elements of a bonus award system BAS are provided in combination with a credit mechanism CM (partially and schematically shown in the drawing) of a typical vending installation. Only those parts of the credit mechanism CM necessary to a complete understanding of the operation of the bonus award system BAS are illustrated.

The credit mechanism CM functions in the following manner as a regular (i.e., non-award) selection is purchased. A pair of normally opened switches CMS1, CMS2 in the credit mechanism CM are adapted to close when sufficient credit is established (as by a customer depositing coins in the vending installation) for the sale of an available selection. The closure of switch CMS1 is adapted to illuminate a select lamp SL in order to visually indicate to the customer that he may designate one of the available selections as the selection that he desires to be vended to him. A lead L1 connects an A.C. power source P' and a terminal T1, and terminal T1 is connected to a terminal T2 by means of a lead L2. Terminal T2 is connected to a terminal T3 by means of switch CMS1 and a lead L3. Lamp SL is connected to ground. Thus, when switch CMS1 is closed (in response to the establishment of credit), lamp SL is illuminated, and the visual signaling function is accomplished.

The closure of switch CMS2 in response to the establishment of credit is adapted to condition the unit to vend the designated selection. Terminal T2 (which is a power terminal) is connected to a terminal T5 by switch CMS2 and a lead L4. A normally opened selection designation switch SS is connected in series with a vend relay VR3 between terminals T5 and T4. The closing of switches CMS2 and SS results in the energization of relay VR3, since a circuit can be traced from power terminal T2 through relay VR3 to ground. Thus, the closing of switch CMS2 conditions relay VR3 for energization when switch SS closes.

A normally closed vend relay switch VRS1 and a normally opened vend relay switch VRS2 are controlled by vend relay VR3. The closing of switch VRS2 is adapted to complete a conventional write-in selection circuit WS whereby the selection designated by the customer (in a manner hereinafter described) is caused to be vended.

Selection designation switch SS is provided so that relay VR3 is not energized (and thus, switch VRS2 is not closed) until the customer has designated the particular selection he desires to purchase. Switch SS is adapted to close upon the designation by the customer of any of the available selections in the vending installation and thus the closing of switch SS (resulting in the energization of relay VR3 and the closing of switch VRS2) causes the particular selection designated by the customer to be vended to the customer.

As the selection is vended, the credit mechanism CM is adapted to function in a conventional manner to remove the established credit in order that switches CMS1, CMS2 may return to their normal opened positions. The opening of switch CMS1 results in lamp SL being extinguished, and the opening of switch CMS2 de-energizes relay VR3 and thus the write-in circuit WS is broken.

The bonus award system BAS includes system conditioning means adapted, in response to the completion of a regular sale of a vendible selection, to condition the system for an award sale of a vendible selection. Power storage means, in the form of a capacitor C1, is provided in order to store power upon the establishment of credit. A terminal T6 is connected to an A.C. power source P, and a lead L5 is connected between terminal T6 and a terminal T7. A diode D is provided between terminal T7 and a terminal T8, and a normally opened credit switch CS1 and a resistor R1 are connected in series between terminal T8 and a terminal T9. Capacitor C1 is normally connected between terminal T9 and ground by means of a lead L6, a normally closed sale conditioning relay switch SRS4, a lead L7, and a terminal T10. Switch CS1 closes whenever credit is established in the credit mechanism CM and opens after credit has been completely removed. Thus, so long as switch SRS4 is closed, the closing of switch CS1 (i.e., in response to credit establishment) causes a D.C. potential to be placed across the plates of capacitor C1 and, thus, capacitor C1 is charged.

A sale conditioning relay SR1 is adapted to be energized when credit is completely removed (i.e., when switch CS1 closes). Relay SR1 is connected between a terminal T11 and ground by a lead L8, a normally closed thermal switch TS, a terminal T12, a lead L9, a terminal T13, and a lead L10. Terminals T9 and T11 are connected by means of a lead L11, a terminal T14, a normally closed credit switch CS2 and a lead L12. Switch CS2 opens and closes in response to the establishment and removal of credit in the following manner. When credit is established, switch CS2 opens, and switch CS2 remains open until credit is completely removed.

With capacitor C1 charged, the removal of credit effects the energization of relay SR1 in the following manner. When credit is completely removed, switch CS1 opens and switch CS2 closes. The closing of switch CS2 completes a circuit from capacitor C1 through relay SR1 to ground. Capacitor C1 discharges, and relay SR1 is thereby energized.

The energization of relay SR1 causes a series of sale conditioning relay switches SRS1–6 to reverse their respective positions. The switches are shown in the drawing in the positions occupied when relay CR1 is de-energized. Thus, normally opened switches SRS1–3, 5, and 6 close, and normally closed switch SRS4 opens in response to the energization of relay SR1.

The closing of switch SRS1 closes a holding circuit which maintains relay SR1 in its energized state after switch CS2 reopens. Credit switch CS2 remains closed until some credit is established either by a normal or a bonus selection. With switch SRS1 closed, a circuit can be traced from terminal T11, through switch SRS1, a lead L13, normally closed switch VRS1, a lead L14, a terminal T15 (which is connected to a grounded terminal T10 by a capacitor C2), a resistor R2, and a lead L15 to power terminal T8. Thus, so long as switches SRS1 and VRS1 are closed, relay SR1 is maintained in an energized state.

The closing of switch SRS2 is adapted to initiate the operation of a thermal relay system TRS which performs a timing function as hereinafter described. With switch SRS2 closed, a circuit can be traced from power terminal

T7 through thermal relay system TRS to ground as follows. A lead L16 connects terminal T7 and switch SRS2, and a lead L17 connects switch SRS2 and a normally closed prime credit relay switch PRS1. A lead L18 connects between switch PRS1 and a bimetallic resistor BMR in thermal relay system TRS, and a lead L19 connects resistor BMR and ground terminal T13. Thus, with switch PRS1 closed and switch SRS2 closed, current passes through resistor BMR.

After a predetermined time interval of energization for resistor BMR (e.g., thirty to sixty seconds depending upon its particular characteristics), resistor BMR is adapted to open circuit the previously described thermal switch TS (which is normally maintained in a closed disposition by a permanent magnet, not shown). The opening of switch TS causes relay SR1 to be de-energized since switch TS is provided in the circuit between relay SR1 and ground. However, if, as will hereinafter be described in detail, the customer elects to make a purchase of an award selection, the thermal relay system TRS will be disenabled whereby relay SR1 is not de-energized by the thermal relay system TRS.

The closing of switch SRS3 and the concomitant opening of switch SRS4 in response to the energization of relay SR1 is adapted to bleed off residual charge remaining on capacitor C1 and to open the charging circuit for capacitor C1. Switch SRS3 is connected in a circuit between the plates of capacitor C1 by means of lead L6, a lead L19, a resistor R3, a lead L20, terminal T14, lead L11, and terminal T9. In this manner, when switch SRS3 closes, residual charge on capacitor C1 is bled off through resistor R3. The removal of excess charge from capacitor C1 serves to preclude an award purchase being predicated on a prior award purchase upon the de-energization of relay SR1. The opening of switch SRS4 serves to open the charging circuit for capacitor C1 so that capacitor C1 is not charged if switch CS1 closes while relay SR1 is energized.

The closing of switch SRS5 in response to the energization of relay SR1 is adapted to activate a visual signal to indicate to the customer that the system is conditioned for the sale of an award selection in the following manner. Power terminal T6 is connected to a terminal T16 by a lead L21. An award lamp AL is connected between terminal T16 and switch SRS5 by means of a lead L22 and a lead L23, and switch SRS5 is connected to ground terminal T10 by means of a lead L24. Thus, the lamp AL is illuminated so long as relay SR1 is energized. As will be obvious to one skilled in the art, lamp AL can be employed to activate a message sign in order to indicate to the customer that he may purchase an available selection of his choice at a bargain price within a predetermined time.

The closing of switch SRS6 in response to the energization of relay SR1 is adapted to condition the system for sale of an award selection by conditioning a prime credit relay PR2 for energization upon the establishment of bargain credit. Thus, terminal T16 is connected with switch SRS6 by means of a lead L25. A circuit can be traced from switch SRS6 to ground via a lead L26, a normally opened credit switch CS3, a lead L27, relay PR2, and a lead L28. Switch CS3 is normally opened and is adapted to be closed upon the establishment of credits corresponding to the bargain purchase price. Thus, with switch SRS6 closed and credit established (i.e., with switch CS3 closed), prime credit relay PR2 will be energized. Switch CS3 reopens when credit is completely removed.

The energization of relay PR2 is adapted to condition the system for customer designation of an award selection in the following manner. A series of prime credit relay switches PRS1–3 are reversed upon the energization of relay PR2. In the drawing, switches PRS1–3 are shown in the normal positions that they occupied when relay PR2 is de-energized.

The opening of switch PRS1 in response to the energization of relay PR2 serves to disenable the thermal relay system TRS and thus to prevent the premature de-energization of relay SR1. As previously described, the circuit for bimetallic resistor BMR (which circuit is initially closed when switch SRS2 closes in response to the energization of relay SR1) includes normally closed switch PRS1, which is governed by relay PR2. When relay PR2 is energized (in response to the establishment of award credit while relay SR1 is energized), switch PRS1 opens, thereby opening the circuit through resistor BMR and, hence, deactivating the thermal relay system TRS. Thus, after switch PRS1 opens, resistor BMR cannot cause switch TS to open so as to result in the deenergization of relay SR1. However, if the customer does not establish the bargain credit (so as to close switch CS3 and thereby energize relay PR2) within the predetermined time (determined by the characteristics of resistor BMR), switch TS opens, relay SR1 is de-energized, and switch SRS6 opens. When switch SRS6 opens, the system is no longer conditioned for the sale of an award selection and, hence, if the customer deposits coins and thereby establishes credit (so as to close switches CS1, CS3) an award sale is not made, but rather the credit mechanism CM functions as if a regular purchase were intended. Thus, the thermal relay system TRS is adapted to limit the availability of an award sale to a predetermined time interval only (as determined by the characteristics of resistor BMR).

The closing of prime credit relay switches PRS2–3 in response to the energization of relay PR2 conditions the system for customer designation of an award selection in the following manner. Switches PRS2, PRS3 are provided in a circuit between terminal T1 and terminals T3 and T5. This circuit is parallel to the previously described circuit through switches CMS1, CMS2. A lead L30 connects terminal T1 and a terminal T17, and terminal T17 is connected with terminal T3 by means of a lead L31, normally opened switch PRS3, and a lead L32. Likewise, terminal T17 is connected with terminal T5 by means of a lead L33, normally opened switch PRS2, and a lead L34.

The pair of switches PRS2, PRS3 functions in the same manner as the pair CMS2, CMS1. As previously described, the closure of switch CMS1 effects the illumination of the album select lamp SL in order to visually signal to the customer that credit has been established and the customer may designate an award selection. The closure of relay PRS3 in response to the energization of relay PR2 accomplishes the same function (i.e., the illumination of lamp SL). The closure of switch CMS2 conditions the vend relay VR3 for energization upon designation by the customer of a particular album selection. The closure of switch PRS2 in response to the energization of relay PR2 performs the same function.

Thus, when relay PR2 is energized, lamp SL is immediately illuminated so as to indicate to the customer that he may take an appropriate designation of an available album selection from these available from the vending installation. When the selection designation is made, as has heretofore been described, selection designation switch SS is closed, thereby resulting in the energization of relay VR3 (since switch PRS2 is closed). The energization of relay VR3 serves to close switch CRS2 so as to complete the write-in selection circuit WS and thence to cause the designated selection to be vended to the customer.

The energization of relay VR3 also serves to reverse normally closed switch VRS1. Since switch VRS1 is provided in the holding circuit for relay SR1, the opening thereof effects the de-energization of relay SR1 and thus causes the system to revert to its normal status (as hereinafter described). However, in order that the system does not revert to its normal status prior to the vending of the designated award selection, relay VR3 and switches VRS1, VRS2 are arranged so that switch VRS2 closes (so

as to complete the write-in circuit WS) prior to the opening of switch VRS1. In this manner, the designated award selection is caused to be vended prior to the reversion of the bonus award system BAS to its normal status.

As mentioned, the opening of switch VRS1 opens the holding circuit for relay SR1 thereby effecting the de-energization thereof and the reversal of relay switches SRS1–6. The opening of switch SRS1 in response to the de-energization of relay SR1 reverts the holding circuit for relay SR1 to its normal open condition. The opening of switch VRS2 serves to place the thermal relay system TRS in its normal condition. The closing of switch SRS3 (and the concomitant opening of switch SRS4) returns the circuit for capacitor C1 to its normal arrangement whereby power is stored upon the purchase of a regular selection. The opening of switch SRS5 serves to extinguish the visual award signal lamp AL.

The opening of switch SRS6, in cooperation with the opening of switch CS3 (which opens when credit is removed), serves to open the power circuit for relay PR2. The de-energization of relay PR2 causes switch PRS1 to close and switches PRS2, PRS3 to open. The closure of switch PRS1, in cooperation with the opening of switch SRS2, serves to place the thermal relay system TRS in its normal condition. The opening of switch PRS3 open circuits lamp SL (so as to extinguish the visual signal) and the opening of switch PRS2 de-energizes relay VR3.

The de-energization of relay VR3 causes switch VRS2 to open (thereby opening the write-in selection circuit WS) and switch VRS1 to open so as to revert the holding circuit for relay SR1 to its normal condition.

In this manner, the bonus award system BAS is restored to its normal condition after completion of an award purchase. Thereafter, if a customer makes a regular purchase of a selection, the cycle of operation may be repeated.

In view of the detailed discussion of structure and function for the various elements of the bonus award system, a detailed discussion of the operation thereof is unnecessary. However, the over-all sequence of operation may briefly be summarized as follows. When credit is established in connection with a regular purchase of a selection available from the vending installation, capacitor C1 is charged. Thereafter, when the established credit is removed, the electrical energy stored in capacitor C1 is used to energize the relay SR1 in order to condition the system for sale of an available selection as an award. At the same time, by means of lamp AL, the customer is signaled that, during a predetermined time interval (as determined by the thermal relay system TRS), he may purchase one of the selections available from the vending installation at a bargain price. If the customer does not elect to purchase any of the available selections at the bargain price within the predetermined time interval, the thermal relay system TRS causes the bonus award system to revert to its rest condition.

However, if the customer establishes award credit in the amount of the bargain price within the predetermined time interval, the system (via the energization of prime credit relay PR2) is conditioned for the designation of an available selection. At the same time, a visual signal is produced so as to indicate to the customer that he may select any one of the award selections available in the vending installation. The customer then designates an available selection and, via the energization of relay VR3, the designated selection is caused to be vended. Thereafter, the bonus award system BAS reverts to its rest condition whereby, in response to the completion of a subsequent regular purchase of an available selection, the subsequent customer is afforded an opportunity to purchase one of the available selections as an award at a bargain price during a predetermined time interval after the completion of the regular purchase.

The regular sale on which the availability of an award sale is predicated is determined by the characteristics of switch CS1. For example, in a coin-operated phonograph installation in which single play selections are available for ten cents and album selections are available for fifty cents, if it is desired to offer an award in response to the sale of a single play selection, switch CS1 is designed to close when ten cents in credits are established. However, if it is desired to offer an award only in response to the sale of an album selection, the switch CS1 is arranged to close when fifty cents in credits are established.

Likewise, the bargain price at which an award selection may be purchased is dependent on the characteristics of switch CS3. Thus, if it is desired to offer an album award selection at half price (i.e., twenty-five cents), the switch CS3 should be arranged to close upon the establishment of twenty-five cents in credits. Alternatively, if single play selections are to be offered at half price (i.e., five cents), switch CS3 should be adapted to close upon the establishment of five cents in credits.

The award offered may be an album selection or a regular selection, as desired, and the particular selection thereof is effected in the conventional write-in selection circuit WS.

An especial advantage of the bonus award system of the present invention is that it permits the benefits that may be derived from an application of bargain and award concepts to the coin-operated vending installation art to be maximized. Since the customer has complete freedom of choice with respect to the award selection to be purchased at the bargain price (i.e., the customer may designate any one of the selections available from the vending installation), the system would in practice be more likely to encourage the customer to make the second (award) purchase than, for example, would a system predicated upon a random award possibility. Furthermore, although the term "selection" has been used in a singular sense throughout and in most instances vending installations embodying the present invention will permit the customer to purchase only one selection at the reduced price, it will be obvious to one skilled in the art that the bonus award system of the present invention could be modified to permit more than one selection to be purchased at a bargain price in response to the purchase thereof at a regular price. For example, in phonograph vending installations, three single-play selections are often available for a price of twenty-five cents. The system of the present invention could be modified to offer, as an award, any three single-play selections for a bargain price of fifteen cents. Thus, as used in the claims, the term "selection" should be understood also to encompass various combinations of the described type.

It should be emphasized that income in a coin-operated vending installation embodying the system of the present invention is maximized through the operation of principles of "override" in the following manner. The bonus award system of the present invention modifies the credit mechanism of the vending installation only briefly (only during that short interval in which the customer is permitted to make the bargain purchase and to designate the award selection). Thereafter the system reverts to its rest condition. Thus, while the selection purchased at the regular price is being rendered, as well as while the award selection is being rendered, the system is disposed in its rest condition. The vending installation is thus available for sale of further selections (which are stored in a memory unit in the phonograph installation and are played in due course in the order of their selection) while the purchased selections are being rendered. However, should there be a duplication in the selections made by different purchasers (as is often the case with popular selections), in conventional practice the given selection is played only once even though the purchase price was deposited more than once. It is the rendition of a selection once in response to several different sales that is denoted by the term "override." By modifying the credit mechanism of the phonograph installation to the mini-

mum extent involved, principles of "override" function in the same manner as on a normal phonograph vending installation. Selections (both regular and award) subsequent to the purchased bargain selection and the purchased regular selections may "override" on the original selections. Thus, the potential for deriving revenue from the phonograph vending installation is maximized.

The bonus award system BAS of the present invention has been specifically described with reference to a coin-operated automatic phonograph vending installation. However, it will be obvious to one skilled in the art that the bonus award system of the present invention could easily be adapted for incorporation in other vending installations. For example, in a cigarette vending installation, a purchaser could be offered an opportunity to purchase a second package of cigarettes at a bargain price during a predetermined time interval following the completion of a regular purchase of a package of cigarettes.

It should be understood that the invention set forth herein broadly embraces the bargain and award concepts described with reference to the operation of a vending installation. It should further be understood that various changes, modifications, and alterations may be effected in the details and arrangements of the various elements described herein, without departing from the spirit and the scope of the subject invention, as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A bonus award system adapted for use in a vending installation wherein at least one vendible selection is available comprising:

first system conditioning means adapted, in response to the completion of a regular purchase of a vendible selection, to condition the system for an award purchase of a vendible selection;

credit responsive means adapted for activation upon the establishment of award credit;

second system conditioning means adapted, in response to activation of the credit responsive means while the system is conditioned for an award sale, to condition the system for customer designation of an award selection;

designation means adapted for activation upon customer designation of an award selection; and

vend means adapted to cause the designated selection to be vended as an award upon activation of the designation means while the system is conditioned for award selection designation.

2. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **1**, and further comprising:

first signal means responsive to the conditioning of the system for an award sale, the said first signal means being adapted to signal the availability of an award sale of a vendible selection; and

second signal means responsive to the conditioning of the system for customer designation of an award selection, the said second signal means being adapted to signal that an available selection may be designated.

3. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **1**, and further comprising:

timing means adapted to determine the period of time during which the system is conditioned for an award sale of a vendible selection,

whereby the system is reconditioned for regular sales of vendible selections if the credit responsive means is not activated within a predetermined time interval while the system is conditioned for an award sale.

4. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **1**, and further comprising:

means adapted to recondition the system for regular sales of vendible selections after the vend means has caused the designated selection to be vended.

5. A bonus award system adapted for use in a vending installation wherein at least one vendible selection is normally available at a given price and wherein at least one award selection is available at a bargain price comprising:

first system conditioning means adapted, in response to the completion of a sale of a vendible selection at the given price, to condition the system for an award sale of a vendible selection at the bargain price;

credit responsive means adapted for activation upon the establishment of award credit corresponding to the bargain price;

second system conditioning means adapted, in response to the activation of the credit responsive means while the system is conditioned for an award sale, to condition the system for customer designation of an award selection;

designation means adapted for activation upon customer designation of an award selection; and

vend means adapted to cause the designated selection to be vended as an award upon activation of the designation means while the system is conditioned for award selection designation.

6. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **5**, and further comprising:

first signal means responsive to the conditioning of the system for an award sale, the said first signal means being adapted to signal the availability of an award sale of a vendible selection at a bargain price; and

second signal means responsive to the conditioning of the system for customer designation of an award selection, the said second signal means being adapted to signal that an available selection may be designated.

7. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **5**, and further comprising:

timing means adapted to determine the period of time during which the system is conditioned for the award sale of a vendible selection,

whereby the system is reconditioned for regular sales of vendible selections if the credit responsive means is not activated within a predetermined time interval.

8. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **5**, and further comprising:

means adapted to recondition the system for regular sales of vendible selections after the vent means has caused the designated selection to be vended.

9. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **5**, wherein the first system conditioning means comprises:

power storage means;

charging means responsive to the establishment of credit for charging the power storage means;

relay switch means adapted when activated to condition the system for an award sale of a vendible selection;

relay means responsive to the discharge of the power storage means for activating the relay switch means; and

means responsive to the removal of credit for discharging the power storage means.

10. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **9**, and further comprising means associated with the first system conditioning means and adapted to disenable the charging means while the system is conditioned for an award sale of a vendible selection.

11. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **5**, wherein the credit responsive means includes a normally opened switch adapted for closure in response to the establishment of credit corresponding to the bargain price.

12. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim **5**, wherein the second system conditioning means comprises:

a relay adapted for activation in response to the activation of the credit responsive means while the system is conditioned for an award sale; and

a normally opened relay switch adapted for closure in response to activation of the relay.

13. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim 5, wherein the designation means includes a normally opened switch adapted for closure in response to the designation by a customer of an available selection.

14. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim 5, wherein the vend means comprises:

a relay adapted for activation in response to activation of the designation means while the system is conditioned for award selection designation; and

a normally opened relay switch adapted for closure in response to the activation of the relay, the closure of the relay switch being adapted to activate a write-in selection circuit.

15. A bonus award system adapted for use in a vending installation wherein at least one vendible selection is normally available at a given price and wherein award selections are available at a bargin price comprising:

power storage means;

charging means responsive to the establishment of credit for charging the power storage means;

first relay switch means adapted when activated to condition the system for an award sale of a vendible selection;

second relay switch means adapted to disenable the charging means while the system is conditioned for an award sale of a vendible selection;

first relay means responsive to the discharge of the power storage means for activating the first and second relay switch means;

means responsive to the removal of credit for discharging the power storage means;

normally opened credit switch means adapted for closure in response to establishment of credit corresponding to the bargin price;

third relay switch means adapted when activated to condition the system for customer designation of an award selection when the first relay switch means is activated;

second relay means responsive to the closure of the credit switch means for activating the third relay switch means;

normally opened designation switch means adapted for closure in response to the designation by a customer of an available selection;

third relay means adapted for activation in response to activation of the designation switch means while the third relay switch means is activated;

write-in selection circuit means adapted when activated to cause a designated selection to be vended; and

normally opened fourth relay switch means adapted for closure in response to the activation of the third relay means, the closure of the fourth relay switch means being adapted to activate the write-in selection circuit means.

16. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim 15, and further comprising:

first signal means responsive to the conditioning of the system for an award sale, the said first signal means being adapted to signal the availability of an award sale of a vendible selection; and

second signal means responsive to the conditioning of the system for customer designation of an award selection, the said second signal means being adapted to signal that an available selection may be designated.

17. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim 15, and further comprising:

timing means adapted to determine the period of time during which the system is conditioned for the award sale of a vendible selection,

whereby the system is reconditioned for regular sales of vendible selections if the credit switch means is not closed within a predetermined time interval.

18. A bonus award system, as claimed in claim 15, and further comprising:

means adapted to recondition the system for regular sales of vendible selections after the write-in selection circuit means has caused the designated selection to be vended.

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