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SHORE STANDARD

Summer memories are just a snapshot away

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BY SHANNON MULLEN
STAFF WRITER

To find the photo booth amid the sea of video games at Jenkinson's South Arcade in Point Pleasant Beach, follow the sound of girlish laughter.

Chances are it will lead you to a group of best friends like Jamie Fishman, Dana Orbe and Annette Garbowski, teenage daytrippers from Bergen County, who made all sorts of humorous faces during an uninhibited three minutes behind the photo booth curtain.

The girls said their \$3 strip of four black-and-white photographs was a great way to capture themselves at this carefree stage of their lives.

"We want memories!" explained Jamie, 17, of Upper Saddle River.

"So when we're 50 we can look back to see what we looked like when we were young," added Dana, 18, of Mahwah.

Video games come and



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go. Time Crisis (3) may be hot now, for example, but it'll be yesterday's news when Time Crisis (4) comes out. The photo booth, in contrast, quietly endures.

Photo booths have been around since the 1920s. Anatol Josepho, a Siberian immigrant and itinerant photographer, is credited with inventing the first photo booth in 1925, making this year the photo booth's 80th anniversary.

Photo booths soon became fixtures at amusement parks and five-and-dime stores, and they were all the rage during World War II. Their popularity slackened with the rise of Polaroid cameras, but even in the digital age there is something both of-the-moment and timeless about them.

Today's state-of-the-art photo booths offer a variety of newfangled options, from sticker photos to interchangeable hairdos. But Jenkinson's has hung on to its decades-old film machines, which are periodically reconditioned.

"It's one of the few things that's stayed the same," said Victoria Corbo, 52, of Bronxville, N.Y. During their weeklong vacation in Ocean Grove, she and her 10-year-old daughter and mother — both of whom also are named Victoria Corbo — had their pictures taken at the photo booth at Jenkinson's South.

"I'm getting mine airbrushed!" her mother announced when their strip of photos emerged



Lindsey Weber, 14, left, and Allyson Dyl, 15. They live in Kearny and spend the summer in Lavallette.

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from the machine.

Gary Gulley, a regional salesman for Photo-Me USA, a Texas-based company that holds a 1946 patent on the type of photo booth that Jenkinson's has, has fond childhood memories of the photo booth in the F.W. Woolworth five-and-dime store in Amarillo, Texas. When the Woolworth stores closed nationwide in the 1990s, he said, it cost Photo-Me USA about \$1 million a year in lost revenue in New York City alone.

"We never got over that," he said.

In recent years, though, people have grown nostalgic for the old-style photo booths, he said. A few books have been published on the subject, and Photo-Me USA now rents out about a dozen reconditioned machines per week across the country for use at weddings, company picnics, bar mitzvahs and other special events.

The candid quality of these photos goes a long way toward explaining their lasting appeal, Gulley said.

"The photos are so random, you don't know exactly when the flash is going to take place, so you're going to be caught a little bit by surprise," he said.

Even high-tech teen-agers such as Allyson Dyl, 15, and Lindsey Weber, 14, find the old-fashioned photo booths appealing. The friends had their pictures taken together one recent rainy day at Jenkinson's North Arcade.

"We were just like, 'Let's go do photos,' " Allyson said. She and Lindsey live in Kearny and spend the summer in Lavallette.

Manuel and Rebecca Viana of Brick had a digital camera and a mobile camera

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phone with them during their visit to the Point Pleasant Beach boardwalk. But they couldn't resist slipping into the Jenkinson's South photo booth after the Corbos were done. Rebecca Viana, 45, said she planned to use their photo strip in a shadowbox display of summertime mementos.

"The first time I was in a photo booth was in 1973, the year I moved here from Portugal," recalled Manuel Viana, 45. Come to think of it, he said, he probably still has those photos, somewhere.

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