

## ***The Journal Times***

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*Yo-yo king pulls his strings in Burlington*

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BURLINGTON --- Life on the road is just an endless series of ups and downs for Paul Kyprie. The Ann Arbor, Mich. performer spends his year yo-yoing from city to city, selling kids on the mythical state of "Yo". He demonstrates his favorite toy in about 200 shows a year as Yo-Master Zeemo, The Earl of Whirl and King of the String. He pulled a lot of strings here Tuesday during two yo-yo shows for the Spinning Top Museum.

A lifelong yo-yoholic, Kyprie became a child yo-yo champion in the 1950's and turned professional as a Duncan yo-yo traveling demonstrator in the 1960's. He is currently in the middle of a three-year tour with a Duncan yo-yo historical exhibit that will be placed in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C. Kids and the times have changed and yo-yos have fallen from the top of the toy heap in favor of *Nintendo* and other video games, Kyprie said. Toy manufacturers and yo-yo nuts like Kyprie are still trying to find a way to bring the simple toy back to public prominence.

The *Teen-Age Mutant Ninja Turtles* in their recent movie, "The Secret of the Ooze", use yo-yos instead of Karate, "This could be the catalyst for another yo-yo craze", Kyprie said. In addition to kiddie hipsters like the *Ninja Turtles*, pitchmen for the yo-yo are led by the *Smothers Brothers*. They have been able to stir the interest in yo-yos among both children and adults.

During a recent yo-yo Competition, Kyprie was surrounded by men in their 50's who won yo-yo championships 30 to 40 years ago and wanted to get back into competition. They remembered the old days when the traveling yo-yo man would stop at the five-and-dime stores in towns across America and show them how to "walk the dog" and "rock the baby".

The yo-yo man would show kids the latest tricks, sell them all a Duncan yo-yo, then head to the next town. Now yo-yo makers have taken to marketing schemes and television advertising to work in the demonstration. "People aren't just going to buy a yo-yo just off the shelf It doesn't have the natural appeal unless you demonstrate it too", Kyprie said.

Donald Duncan, who was also the inventor of ice cream on a stick and the parking meter, discovered the key to selling yo-yos after he bought an existing toy company in 1929.