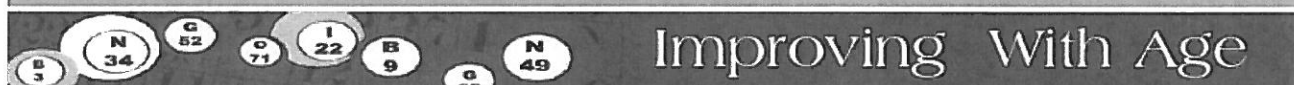


California Charity Bingo Association
www.savecharitybingo.org

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Improving With Age

By Joe Gomez, President
 California Charity Bingo Association (CCBA)

Whether it's wine, cheese or people, most things I love in life seem to improve with age. That's certainly true of my friends and family. Over the past decades, I've watched my children grow to become adults I now admire. They're vibrant, productive citizens, who are full of life and spirit. Yet, they still retain the basic characteristics that made them special as young toddlers. My lifelong friends have also grown wiser, maintaining their core values while adapting to modern technology.

I see the game of bingo the same way. Bingo has been around more than four centuries, but bingo games still manage to reflect their simple trademarks, while evolving to accommodate new technology. We can actually trace bingo back to Italy. It originally

began in 1530 as a lottery-style game, called "Lo Giuoco del Lotto d'Italia." Bingo later spread across Europe, where it was also used as a children's game to help students learn math and spelling.

The game arrived in America in 1929, when it was discovered by a struggling toy salesman at a Georgia county fair. It was called "Beano" back then, and players enjoyed the game with the help of dried beans and cardboard sheets. By the 1940's, bingo was being played across the country, used as fundraisers for churches and charities.

Today, the beans and cardboard sheets are long gone, but bingo still reflects its simple roots. Bingo is played in more than 100 facilities across California, with all the proceeds going to charitable causes.

Electronic bingo is one of the most popular modern versions. It combines the basic essence of traditional paper bingo with the benefits of contemporary tech-

nology. It also recognizes the needs of players with disabilities, by allowing them to enjoy games they would otherwise be unable to play.

The future of electronic bingo is now in jeopardy. The California State Legislature passed a special interest bill last year which attempted to ban modernization of bingo machines. The issue is now tied-up in the courts, but I'm hopeful electronic bingo will survive. Bingo should be allowed to evolve in a way that allows players of all ages and abilities to participate. Like family and friends, Bingo should continue to improve with age.

CCBA is an organization of charities, vendors and volunteers dedicated to fun and safe Bingo that benefits charitable causes in California.

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