

game routine 278 may be performed. The game routine 278 could be any one of the game routines disclosed herein, such as one of the five game routines 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, or another game routine.

[0073] After the routine 278 has been performed to allow the player to play the game, block 280 may be utilized to determine whether the player wishes to terminate play on the gaming unit 20. If the player wishes to stop playing the gaming unit 20, which wish may be expressed, for example, by selecting a "Cash Out" button, the controller 100 may dispense value to the player at block 282 based on the outcome of the game(s) played by the player. The operation may then return to block 266. If the player did not wish to quit as determined at block 280, the operation may return to block 272.

Light Valve Control

[0074] FIG. 8 is flowchart of a light valve control routine 300 which may be executed by the controller 100 in conjunction with or as part of the main routines 200, 264. Referring to FIG. 8, at block 302, the routine may power up the gaming unit 20 by going through a normal power up sequence. The routine 300 may then cause the light valve 69 to become opaque at block 304 and block all viewing areas from view. This may include blocking view of the slot reels 68, the bonus viewing area, the mechanically moveable member, and any other viewing areas provided.

[0075] The routine 300 will then cause the gaming unit 20 to operate in an attract, normal, bonus, or idle mode at block 308 as well as causing the light valve 69 (whether light valve 69 is a single light valve, or multiple light valves) to be transparent or opaque as needed for the game play as shown at block 308. Depending on the particular light valve 69 being utilized, causing the light valve 69 to become transparent may involve either applying (or increasing) a voltage to the light valve 69 or discontinuing (or decreasing) the voltage being applied to the light valve 69.

[0076] The slot reels 68 may have an illumination element to enhance their visibility to a player. Other mechanically moveable members, if provided, may correspond to the game and may be activated as part of the game.

[0077] At block 310, the routine may determine if the gaming unit 20 is in a tilt mode. A tilt may occur on the gaming unit 20 at any time. For example, a coin-in tilt may occur when coins are input into the gaming unit 20. Also, a mechanical malfunction in the operation of the gaming unit 20, such as, doors opening inside the gaming unit, reels stopping in the wrong position, etc., could cause a tilt condition. An electrical malfunction in the operation of the gaming unit 20, such as, a power supply failure, a communication failure, a device failure, etc., may cause a tilt condition. Also, a customer action damaging mechanical or electrical components could cause a tilt condition. A hopper empty condition where coins need to be placed in the hopper because the hopper is empty could also cause a tilt condition.

[0078] If it is determined at the block 310 that the gaming unit 20 is not in a tilt mode, the routine 300 will return to the block 306. If a tilt mode is detected at the block 310, the routine 300 may cause the light valve 69 to become opaque and block the view of: the slot reels 68 at block 312, at least a portion of the main display area on the electronic display

unit 70 at a block 314, and block at least a portion of the bonus display area on the electronic display unit 70 at a block 316.

[0079] The gaming unit 20 may then be serviced to resolve the tilt condition at a block 320. The service may require the display areas to be transparent for servicing. If it is determined at the block 322 that the tilt condition has been resolved, the routine 300 may cause the light valve 69 to become transparent at a block 324. If multiple light valves are utilized, select light valves may be changed from the opaque state to the transparent state as needed so the gaming unit 20 is put back into the state just before the tilt occurred. The routine 300 may then return to the block 306. Also, the routine 300 described herein may comprise additional or fewer criteria than indicated.

[0080] Although examples of displays are described herein as comprising particular images on electronic display units 70, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the electronic display units 70 are not limited to any particular image. FIG. 9A is an exemplary display 326 that may be viewed by a player during performance of a slots routine utilizing a plurality mechanical slot reels 68. Referring to FIG. 9A, the controller 100 has caused the light valve 69 to become transparent to allow the mechanical devices and electrical images disposed behind the light valve 69 to be visible. As seen in FIG. 9A, a player is able to view portions of the mechanical slot reels 68 through the openings 87a, 87b, 87c in the transparent panel 67.

[0081] Additional graphics may also be displayed by the electronic display unit 70 and viewed through the various openings in the transparent panel 67. For example, the name of the game routine being played may be viewed through one of the openings, the current bet (\$1) may be viewed through an opening 327, the number of remaining credits may be viewed in the opening 86b, and the minimum bet may be displayed in another opening. Additional graphics relating to the game routine may be displayed on one or more of the electronic display units 70. For example, the electronic display units 70 may include video images of a plurality of player selectable buttons to allow the player to control the play of the slots game. The buttons may include a "See Pays" button, a "Cash Out" button, a "Spin" button, and a "Max Bet" button. Player information may also be generated as a video image on the electronic display units 70. The player information video image may include the player's name, the player's winnings, the player's profile, the player's wagers, the player's favorite games, etc.

[0082] FIG. 9B is an exemplary display 328 that may be viewed by a player when the controller 100 caused the light valve 69 to become substantially opaque to block the view of the mechanical slot reels 68 and the video images on the electronic display units 70. As seen in FIG. 9B, a player viewing the electronic gaming unit 20 is unable to see the mechanical slot reels 68 or the video images on the electronic display units 70 through the various openings, such as openings 86a, 86b, 87a, 7b, and 87c in the transparent panel 67. The display 328 as shown in FIG. 9B may relate to a display shown during an attraction sequence. Attraction graphics may be generated on the electronic display units 70, which may include a video image of a scrolling list of games that may be played on the gaming unit 20, and a video image of instructions for initiating a new game.