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San Antonio's Kiddie Park saved!

Pam Sherborne
Amusement Today

There is a little acre in San Antonio, Texas, that has caused some big news among those in the community and has spread throughout the amusement industry.

That news — the reopening of San Antonio's oldest amusement park, Kiddie Park. The significance — it is one of the oldest kiddie parks in the U.S.

It opened in 1925 and many San Antonio natives remember their first visit to the small park as children. But, over the years, as often happens, small parks such as this one fall into despair. If it weren't for the dream of Rad and Ashley Weaver, that small part of the amusement industry might be no more. They are now the new owners.

"We used to ride by that park all the time," said Ashley Weaver. "My husband remembers going there as a boy. We used think of all the possibilities there. When it came up for sale, we decided to buy it."

The couple took ownership of the facility, only for children under 12 years of age, in August, 2009. They kept the facility open during the fall, all along doing improvements,

▶ See **KIDDIE**, page 3



AT PHOTOS / GARY SLADE

Above, Ashley Weaver, owner and GM of Kiddie Park in San Antonio, proudly shows off the park's new entrance. Below, Kid Steam hand cars were added new this season with the reopening of the historic kiddie park.



Brain Surge

New Chance Morgan ride debuts at Mall of America

Scott Rutherford
Amusement Today

The first park model of Chance Morgan's new Unicoaster flat ride was unveiled March 20, 2010 at Nickelodeon Universe inside Minnesota's sprawling Mall of America.

This intriguing new interactive attraction, inspired by a concept from SkyCoaster

inventor Bill Kitchen, features eight sweeps radiating from a central column. At the end of each sweep is a two-seat gondola with over-the-shoulder restraints. Sixteen riders per cycle use a lever between the seat pairs to control the forward/backward flipping motion of the individual gondolas as they travel around an undulating

▶ See **MALL**, page 3



PHOTO COURTESY MOA

BrainSurge, the first example of Chance Morgan's new Unicoaster flat ride, opened to rave reviews on March 20 at the Mall of America's Nickelodeon Universe.

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Gary Slade

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Kiddie Park reopens

Located just a few blocks from the site of the former Playland Amusement Park, north of downtown San Antonio, Kiddie Park has a long rich history, one that has outlived its neighbor down the road.

Dating back to 1925, Kiddie Park is Texas' oldest operating park, and it is not only a San Antonio favorite, but is a part of the local culture and area's history.

Why you ask?

Because generations of San Antonio families have made the trip to this simple, laid back, one-acre parcel to make their first ride on a carousel, ferris wheel, or umbrella ride a must do. Going to Kiddie Park is like watching time stand still. It continues to operate the old classics and in doing so has the old-time charm to go with it.

When Kiddie Park closed during the summer season last year, its future looked bleak. The property was showing its age, its safety record was starting to become a concern among local fandom and it wasn't a fun and festive place children under 12 years were enjoying.

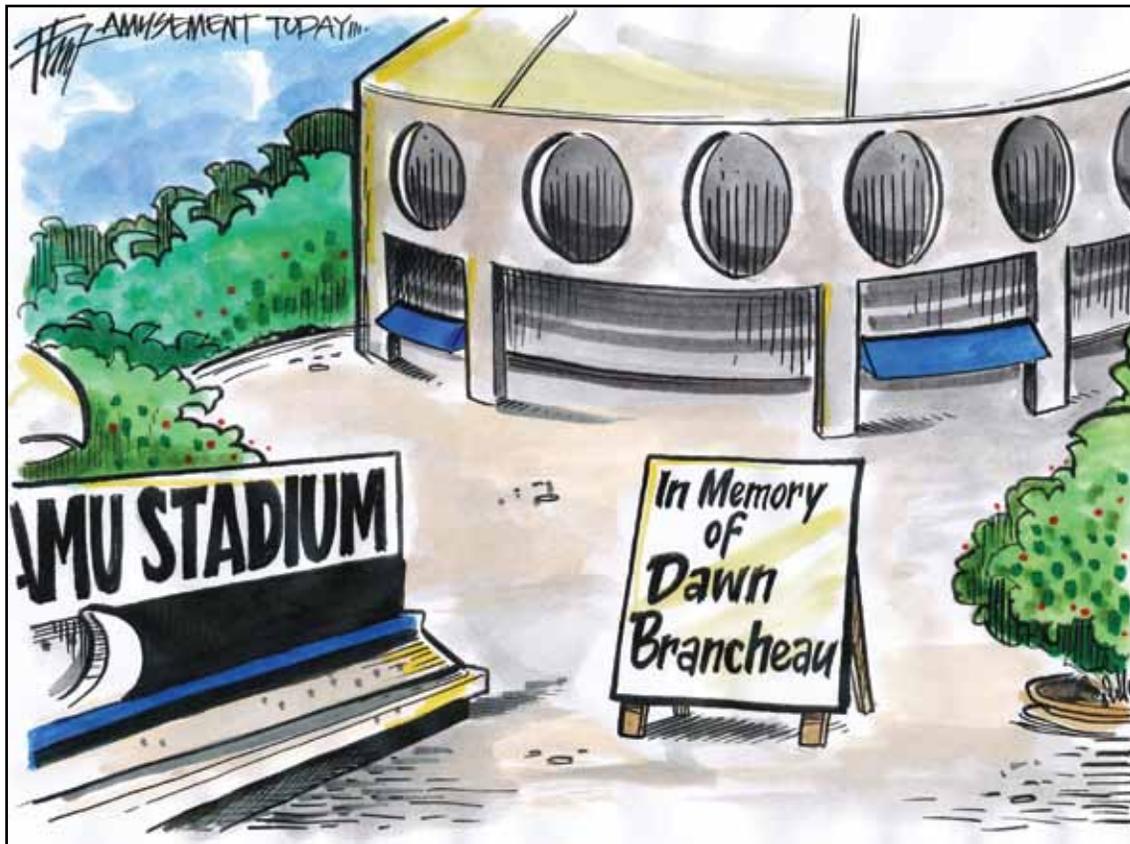
That's when Rad and Ashley Weaver stepped in and did what was right for the local community. They saved Kiddie Park by acquiring the entire property from its former owner. They spent long tireless hours cleaning up the facility. They rebuilt rides that were in need of maintenance, they painted, they added new fencing and landscaping, they added a new office and restroom facility, and they gave the park a San Antonio limestone rock entrance that would make any person calling Texas home proud to walk through. Kiddie Park was back and better than ever.

While Ashley serves as the park's general manager, and is there to oversee the day to day operations, she did the right thing by surrounding herself with many qualified people on her staff. She may not have had any previous park experience, but she did have the one thing that one cannot overlook: she and her husband cared enough about this park, about the children who visited it, and their local community to borrow the money needed that would ultimately allow it to reopen.

At a time when our industry has seen far too many traditional parks close for various reasons, this is certainly the feel good story our amusement industry has been long overdue to read about.

Amusement Today salutes Rad and Ashley Weaver for saving a San Antonio institution and ensuring that a whole new generation of visitors will have their stories to tell in the future.

—Gary Slade



Scott Rutherford

Preservation: material or memory?

Well, the long-awaited spring season is finally upon us and I guess it's time for me to dust off my Preservation Soapbox and climb up for a sermon.

This time it's about Bay Beach Amusement Park in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and their "purchase and relocation" of the famous 1915 vintage John Miller-designed/Harry Baker-built Zippin Pippin wooden roller coaster from the Mid-South Fairgrounds aka Libertyland in Memphis, Tenn.

While I applaud their efforts to save a classic wooden roller coaster from oblivion, my concern over this one is: Just what are they *preserving*?

It's a known fact that the late Elvis Presley was fond of renting out the park and privately riding the Pippin (that's what the coaster was called in the pre-Libertyland days). He reportedly took a spin with daughter Lisa Marie six days before his death. On the surface, it seems like a marketable PR coup for Bay Beach to claim that Elvis' beloved coaster will reopen in Wisconsin in 2011. But will it be, really?

According to various reports, Bay Beach is purchasing the *idea* of and *rights* to rebuild the Pippin instead of physically relocating the



Rutherford

actual structure the King enjoyed all those years ago. While they can spend their money on whatever they choose (the reported price tag was \$35,000 for the rights and a total of nearly \$3 million to complete the project), I find myself wondering if they were aware of other candidates that were in much better shape for relocation?

Chief among these are the Miracle Strip Starliner (recently rebuilt and in excellent condition at Florida's recently-closed Cypress Gardens); Geauga Lake's wonderful Big Dipper; or even the Americana Screechin' Eagle. All three are proven rides that deserve to be saved. Dare I say that all three are far more entertaining coasters than the now-gone Pippin, which has now been completely demolished.

Whatever the outcome of this saga, the building of the new ride is a plus for all parties. Though the lights went out in Memphis for the world's second oldest roller coaster, it's a safe bet that the Badger State's Zippin Pippin 2.0 will most likely be one that Elvis could not have resisted.

Amen.

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►KIDDIE

Continued from page 1

bringing the existing rides up to codes and up-to-date. They disassembled the old coaster, but kept the remaining original rides.

Then, they closed around the Christmas holidays and through the month of January. They made a real push to get most of the remaining renovations and construction complete.

The grand opening was held March 8.

"I think the most exciting part of this has been the great response we have gotten from everyone," she said. "It has been wonderful and very fun."

The Weavers have constructed a new office and new restrooms, the latter equipped with a sink and toilet just kid's size. They have revitalized the concession stand and added a local favorite Double Dave's Pizza Works. The stand also serves the regular fare such as hot dogs, popcorn, cotton candy, small corn dogs, Blue Bell ice cream, sodas, nachos and candy inside an old-fashioned jar.

The have new landscaping and new fencing. There used to be two entrances into the park and now there is just one. And, that one has been remade with San Antonio limestone columns and iron gates.

There are nine rides including a 1918 Herschel Spillman carousel. There is a Ferris Wheel. There are the 1925 rides: a car ride, airplane ride, boat ride, bus ride, horse-drawn carriage ride, helicopter and flying saucer ride, and a new Jet Steam hand car ride.

The Weavers have no formal experience in the amusement park business, but Ashley Weaver said she feels they will be able to give it a good shot. Her husband is in charge of new business development for McComb Enterprises so he used to business management. The Weavers have partnered with Brent Conger, who will also be the general manager. Weaver, herself, has visited many amusement parks over the years and now that she has a three-year-old, Cecelia, she knows what she would like for her own child.

"Cecelia has been my main market research," Weaver said. "She has given me advice about candy and some other things. She has been right-on



AT PHOTOS / GARY SLADE

Top to bottom: New signage, and a remolded concession stand, are just part of the improvements to San Antonio's Kiddie Park this year. Originally opened in 1925, the park continues to operate such classics as the boats, Herschel Spillman Carousel and the helicopters/flying saucers.

so far."

Birthday parties have always been a big part of the business at Kiddie Park and that is not changing. In fact, Weaver said she feels it is a growth component.

"We had 30 birthday parties last weekend," she said. "We had 1,250 people in this park on Saturday. And, that has been pretty consistent."

To keep up with the

demand, park staff has been busy building and painting more picnic tables, just in time for spring break

The park's operating hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., every day of the week. Admission is free, with a separate cost for each ride. An unlimited ride pass is offered for \$12, except for Bargain Wednesdays when that price drops to \$10.



PHOTOS COURTESY MOA

The first park model of Chance Morgan's Unicoaster allows 16 riders to use a central lever to electrically control the forward/backward flipping motion of their gondolas.

►MALL

Continued from page 1

track at 35 mph. Ride time is 120 seconds per cycle.

The Unicoaster has been appropriately dubbed BrainSurge at MOA, which is based on the Nick television network's game show of the same name. The ride sports an attractive illumination package that utilizes power-saving LED lights. In the center of machine is a giant model of a brain that glows and flashes, sending 'signals to the riders.'

When the new ride premiered at MOA's Nickelodeon Universe, 16 of the nation's smartest kids were the first to try it out. The youngsters were all members of Mensa, the organization open to anyone who scores in the top two percent on an accepted, standardized intelligence test.

Co-creator Bill Kitchen said, "We were looking for a way to reinvent the roller coaster but on a smaller footprint. The Unicoaster gives riders all of the thrills of a looping inverted roller coaster at a fraction of the space and price."

Requiring approximately the same amount of real estate as a Scrambler or Tilt-a-Whirl, the new ride stands 18-foot-tall and requires diameter clearance of only 56 feet including

platform. Minimum passenger height is just 48 inches.

Amusement Today spoke with Chance Morgan's Angus Jenkins during the ride's grand opening. "Our newest ride was very well received by the general public who ventured out to give it a try at Mall of America," said Jenkins. "We had an open dialogue and worked very closely with Nickelodeon to transform the Unicoaster into their vision of the BrainSurge. We are all very happy with the result. The custom decorations and lighting effects unique to the BrainSurge turned out very well. It's a true interactive attraction in that riders can choose use the control lever to make it either gentle or extremely intense."

When asked about future versions of the ride and what other options are available, Jenkins confirmed there are presently three or four parties seriously interested in acquiring their own version of the Unicoaster. "It's a ride that can be customized to just about whatever the customer wants," he added. "We can offer a smaller version with just four sweeps seating eight riders, or double the existing number of sweeps to sixteen with a capacity of 32 riders."

• www.chancemorgan.com.

2 MINUTE DRILL



Compiled by Janice Witherow

Bob Dean Leisure Labs LLC

As President of Leisure Labs LLC, Sarasota, Florida, Bob Dean is a master specialist in ride representation and consulting for the amusement industry. After several years in the retail and institutional securities business, Bob changed his career path entirely and joined Omni Films International in 1987, followed by a stint with Iwerks Entertainment (which shortly thereafter purchased Omni Films). Bob then fulfilled a lifelong dream in 2000 when he started his own business, and he hasn't looked back since. A true professional with a creative gift, Bob's pleasant approach makes a lasting impression.



Dean

Title
President, but that doesn't have much meaning in such a small organization.

Number of years in the industry
23 great years.

Biggest challenge facing our industry
Debt for sure, but building and holding park attendance gains seems to be very challenging and the holy grail of growth.

Best thing about the industry
You can be in a room with Nobel Prize winners, and still everyone wants to talk to the roller coaster guy!

Favorite amusement ride
I honestly do not have a favorite ride, but a man in my position probably shouldn't name one even if he did.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...
Trying to build or turn around some other type of business.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ...
Visiting parks that are in full swing. I love to watch the little kids. From the minute they hit the parking lot they are completely out of their minds with joy.

My first car was ...
A Vega. After several months, it became "The Vagrant." This was an early lesson in product quality that sticks with me to this day.

A recent life-changing moment for me was ...
Finally living my dream of owning and running a business.

Favorite midnight snack
Hershey bar.

My perfect day is spent ...
Hanging outdoors with my family.

Favorite form of exercise
Right now it's tennis. I picked up golf at 25, Ju Jitsu at 41 and tennis at 53. Maybe I'll try MMA or ballroom dancing when I'm 60. We'll see.

Three items on my bedside table are ...
Alarm clock, lamp and phone.

The worst movie I have ever sat through would have to be ...
I've had a few movies disappoint me, but I honestly can't remember the last really bad movie I sat through.

Ten years ago, I was ...
Starting my own business.

I can't stand being around people who ...
Lack integrity or provide poor service.

I wish I was better at ...
Being patient. I have to work at it all the time.

The longest I have ever gone without sleep is ...
48 hours. Additional details are on a strict need-to-know basis.

On my last birthday, I ...
Played it very low-key with my family.

My most prized possession is ...
My home.

Favorite fast food
Quiznos. I'm a regular at my local shop, and I go out of my way to find them when I'm traveling.

When I say Jay Leno, you say ...
Johnny Carson. For me, he will always be synonymous with The Tonight Show.

To suggest a candidate for the Two-Minute Drill feature, contact columnist Janice Witherow at jwith-erow@amusementtoday.com or (419) 357-3520.

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BRIEF

Master French chef Paul Bocuse makes impression at Liseberg Park

Master French chef Paul Bocuse recently joined the ranks of numerous sports stars and music celebrities to become the first chef – and the first person from France – to take his place in Liseberg Park's Walk of Fame.

Paul Bocuse, who has been called the chef of chefs, is a living legend in gastronomic circles. The 84-year-old celebrity visited Liseberg on Feb. 12 to make his handprints at Liseberg's Walk of Fame. The chef pressed his hands firmly into the cement and completed the process by signing his autograph. When his signature turned out slightly off-center it became clear that Paul Bocuse is a perfectionist.

Many famous names can already be seen at Liseberg's Walk of Fame, including those of Michael Jackson, Tina Turner, Paul McCartney and Whitney Houston.

"It's a big honour for Liseberg and all our restaurants to welcome a legend such as Paul Bocuse. He has made an enormous contribution to the restaurant world and we are very pleased he has come to visit," said Thomas Sjöstrand, CEO of Liseberg's Restaurant AB.

Vekoma Stingray a 'flying coaster' sensation

Andrew Mellor
Amusement Today

The first Stingray coaster to be built by Dutch manufacturer Vekoma Rides Manufacturing has enjoyed a successful initial few months of operation at the Suzhou Giant Wheel Park in Suzhou, China.

Opened in July last year, the Stingray is designed to offer "the ultimate flying coaster experience," with riders enjoying a face-down flying sensation parallel to the track. The ride utilizes two, eight-seater trains with passengers seated in two rows of four. The seat designs feature a large opening angle between the upper and lower body and a slightly curved back support, enabling an optimal flying position and a good sight forward, combined with maximum safety and comfort for riders.

Once the ride sequence begins, passengers are taken from the station up a vertical lift, and rather than being tilted forward while in the station, are tilted forwards during the lift, thus providing a spectacular view over the rest of the park. In addition to this unique feature, the Stingray has other special elements too, including an outside loop, a double horizontal loop and a 180 degree roll, all experienced while riders lie face down.

The compact design of the ride means it covers a footprint of just 37.2 meters by 56.6 meters (122 feet by 186 feet) and has a track length of 362 meters (1,187 feet). Standing



Vekoma's new Stingray at Suzhou Giant Wheel Park, in Suzhou, China, has proved a popular attraction since its July debut.

PHOTOS COURTESY VEKOMA

at 32.4 meters (106 feet) in height, the lift height is 31.6 meters (104 feet) and the maximum speed reached is 76 kph (47 mph). Ride time comes in at 63 seconds and hourly capacity is approximately 525 riders.

The Stingray is a second generation Flying Dutchman and incorporates the original features and design philosophies of the first generation ride, but with major improvements to the restraint system, tilting device and ride control issues including fault diagnostics.

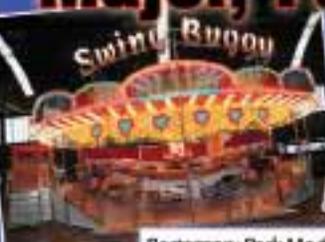
"With the Stingray we have created a new generation flying coaster that is affordable, compact, fast and exciting!" commented Vekoma account manager Charlotte van Etten.





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Europarks dissolved - IAAPA Europe steps in

Andrew Mellor
Amusement Today

Europarks, the federation of European park associations, was dissolved in November last year following confirmation from IAAPA Europe that all the functions previously carried out by Europarks would be continued under its stewardship.

Founded in 1981 by the U.K. association BALPPA and Germany's VDFU, Europarks was established as a lobbying group to represent the amusement park industry within the European parliament. During that time it has been active in many different areas relating to wide ranging cross-national issues, from the development of a European ride

safety reporting system and European safety standards to subjects such as VAT, leisure park accessibility, fair competition, human resources and training.

The membership of Europarks was made up of industry associations from different European countries, in addition to individual attraction venues where a national association did not exist. Appropriately, the last person to hold the position of President of the organization was a representative of one of the founding associations, BALPPA Chief Executive Colin Dawson, who played a key role in bringing about the dissolution of Europarks. Explaining the background to the decision, voted on by all member



associations, Dawson pointed out that there was no longer any reason for Europarks to exist since the development of IAAPA Europe with an office based in Brussels.

"In the past couple of years IAAPA has built up a major European presence and has begun campaigning on similar issues to those of Europarks," he said. "The risk of confusion with two organizations representing the interests of all the attractions in Europe was likely to cause future difficulties in ensuring a clear voice was delivering key messages. IAAPA has excellent

resources at its disposal and with a dedicated, fully staffed office in Brussels will be just as effective in representing the industry's interests in Europe as Europarks has been."

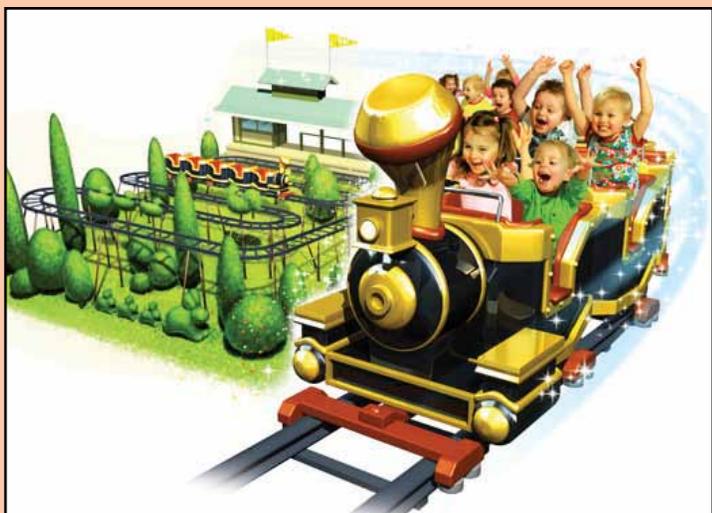
For IAAPA Europe, Executive Director Andreas Veilstrup Andersen said: "After Europarks' decision to dissolve the association in November last year, we have pooled the resources and continued the activities of Europarks in Brussels. And the overall goal with IAAPA Europe's presence in Brussels is to create one, strong voice for the attractions industry.

"With the dissolution of Europarks, a new forum for the national associations in Europe was needed and from January 1, 2010, we have

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established a Government Relations committee with representatives from all the major European associations. This committee basically replaces the Europarks council and oversees all our government relations activities in Europe."



Gröna Lund adding Zamperla childrens coaster in 2010

This year it is the tots' turn to get a new attraction at Sweden's Gröna Lund. Tuff-Tuff Tåget (the Choo-Choo Train) is Gröna Lund's sixth coaster and will be the first step in the roller coaster careers of small children. Supplied by Zamperla, the 262-foot-long coaster's eight-car train has no height requirement, so parents and adults can bring along small children for their very first ride.

"Tuff-Tuff Tåget is big news for all small children, and it also constitutes an essential part of our work to create attractions to suit every guest - from the smallest to the bravest," explains Jan Roy, president of Gröna Lund's Tivoli.

The coaster is currently under construction, but is right on track to debut April 24 when Gröna Lund opens its gates for the season. Tuff-Tuff Tåget is being placed next to Cirkuskarusellen (the Old Carousel) just inside the main entrance, replacing an old outdoor café.

"Roller coasters have always been firm favourites with our visitors - they're a real amusement park classic. Naturally, we're very excited to be able to offer a choice of six here at Gröna Lund now - that's three more than in 2006," said Peter Osbeck, Gröna Lund's rides manager. "Tuff-Tuff Tåget will be the small children's introduction to the world of roller coasters, and then they have five more to grow into."

Gardaland targets families and teens

Andrew Mellor
Amusement Today

April 1st will mark the opening of the 35th season at Gardaland, in northern Italy, and this year the park is reaching out in particular to families and teenagers with two new attractions and some tempting ticket options.

New entertainment at the park includes Inferis: face to face with fear!, the first "hell themed horror house" to be presented in Italy. The walk-through attraction offers up 15 obscure sets featuring live actors ready to send shivers down the spines of even the most fearless visitor as they walk along a 150 meter (492 foot) path within a total attraction area of 1,000 square meters (10,764 square feet). Designed strictly for guests over 14-years-of-age, Inferis promises flames, swamps, poisonous fog and numerous other special effects - and plenty of fun for Gardaland guests.

Another new feature for 2010 will be *SpongeBob 4-D* in the Time Voyagers theatre which will provide a 4D film experience courtesy of Nickelodeon. Between waves and bizarre marine creatures, viewers will experience a captivating tale set in the legendary Bikini Bottom city, whose citizens also include Patrick Star, Squidward Tentacles,



Italian park Gardaland is targeting families and teenagers with its new attractions for 2010, including Inferis - a new horror house.

IMAGES COURTESY GARDALAND

Mr. Krabs and Sheldon J. Plankton.

The multi-sensory adventure incorporates a variety of special effects, in addition to the 3D element of the film, including wind, odors, light games, water splashes, vibrations, leg ticklers and seat movements.

As well as the new attractions, Gardaland is also hoping to tempt visitors with a range of flexible new ticket options which the park believes will cater to the diverse needs of all types of customers. For 2010 discounted tickets will be available for families of three, four and five people, combined tickets for visits to

Gardaland and the Sea Life Aquarium will be offered, as will "convenient" season tickets. Benefits will also be available to those purchasing tickets via the park's website, to guests staying at the Gardaland Hotel Resort and to those booking a stay through the park's tour operator, Incoming Gardaland.

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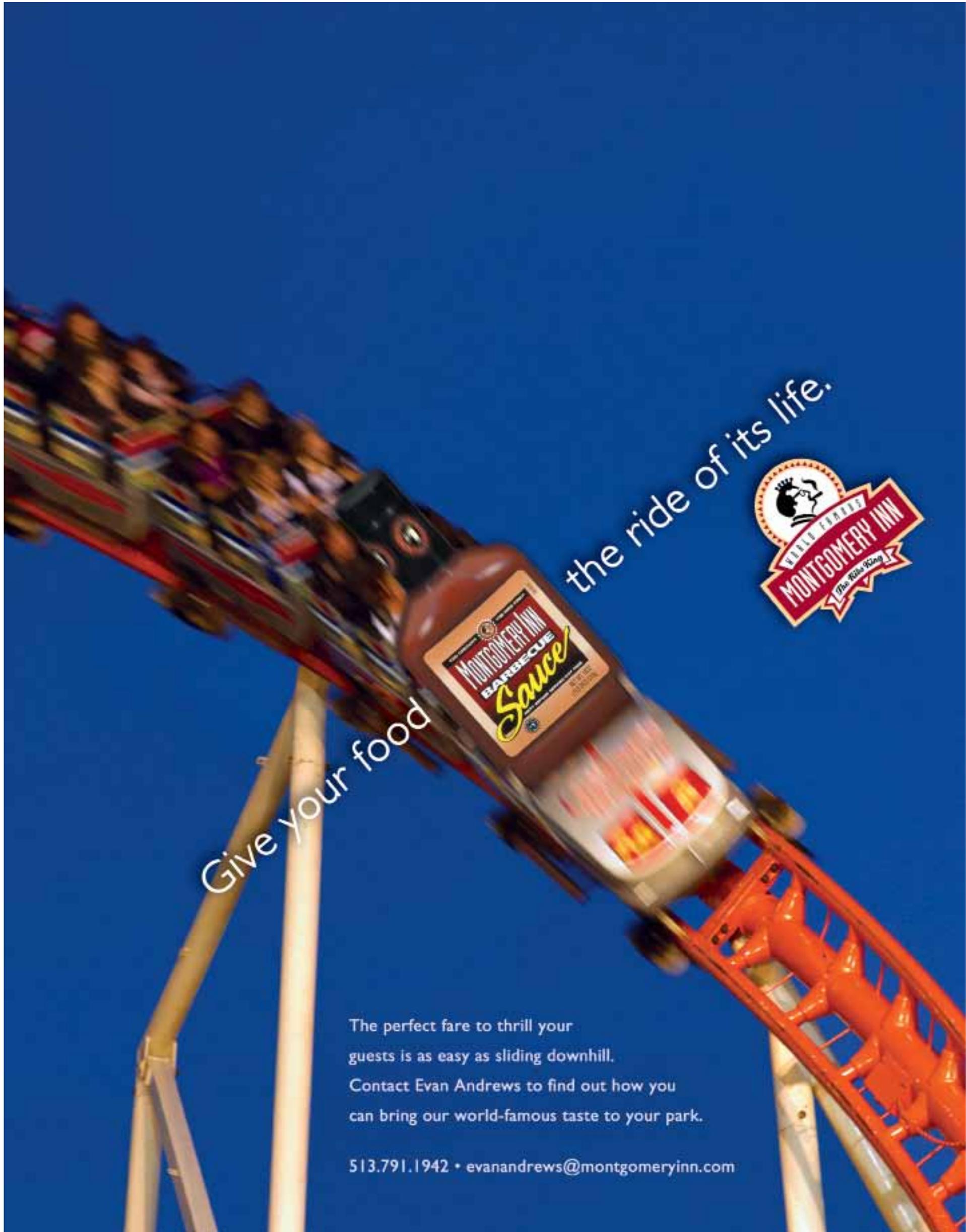


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BRIEF

New version of Zippin Pippin to roll again in Wis.

Bay Beach Amusement Park in Green Bay, Wis. finalized a \$35,000 deal on March 18 to purchase the rights and design of the Zippin Pippin wooden roller coaster from the Mid-South Fairgrounds aka Libertyland in Memphis, Tenn.

The historic John Miller-designed/Harry Baker-built Pippin (Libertyland added the 'Zippin') originally opened in 1915 but was moved a short distance in 1923 to the site where it operated until Oct. 2005.

Since the original ride has been completely razed, *Amusement Today* asked Green Bay Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department Bill Landvatter who would be building the new ride and just how much would be salvaged from the now-demolished coaster in Memphis. "I don't want to comment on who will be involved in the design or building of the coaster until we have finalized contracts," said Landvatter. "We will be reconstructing the ride with all new lumber and expect to use different trains. We have acquired the old [PTC] trains, other signage and materials and expect to find creative ways to utilize them."

Construction of the new \$3 million coaster is expected to begin this summer with a planned opening in spring 2011.

From Rocky Mountain Construction and Ride Centerline

Innovative new track design introduced for Texas Giant

Gary Slade
Amusement Today

Make no doubt about it, the Texas Giant's \$10 million makeover is now officially underway at Six Flags Over Texas.

During a press introduction on March 3, the Arlington, Texas park debuted the newest in track design for the traditional wooden coaster with the unveiling of Iron Horse Coaster track [a Six Flags name/term]. The steel I-Box design, that will now serve as the track for the legendary coaster, is the result of three years of engineering by Rocky Mountain Construction and Ride Centerline.

The Chinchillian Red painted track is not bent or rolled, but is cut, then welded together in 40 to 53-foot lengths before being bolted to the Texas Giant's wooden support structure. The new track design does not use any wood on the track bed, nor does it use any track bolts. A newly engineered galvanized ledger design that the track bolts to acts as the spine/backbone for the steel railed track. Weight of the new track is said to be about the same as the former 9-ply wooden track complete with steel track and track bolts.

The park also announced that when the new Texas Giant opens in spring 2011, it will stand 153 feet tall, 10 feet taller than it is now, feature a 79-degree first drop and will incorporate numerous 95-degree banked turns throughout the ride. The coast-



Six Flags Over Texas Park President Steve Martindale, left, and Rocky Mountain Construction President, Fred Grubb, point to the new I-Box track design (shown at right) currently being installed on the park's Texas Giant. The ride will reopen in 2011.

AT PHOTOS / GARY SLADE



er will also be faster, reaching speeds of 65 mph.

"This ride is going to take the entire industry by storm," said Steve Martindale, Six Flags Over Texas park president. "Six Flags has built a reputation for developing original ride concepts and the Texas Giant will be our crowing jewel."

Construction of the super hybrid coaster will be done by Rocky Mountain Construction Group of Hayden, Idaho. Engineering is by Ride Centerline, based in Hyde Park, Utah.

"Six Flags Over Texas has a long rich history, of being

a leader in the amusement industry, for installing innovative products and new designs." said Fred Grubb, president of Rocky Mountain Construction. "The selection of our steel I-Box coaster track on the new Texas Giant is just another chapter in their 50-year history and one we are proud to be a part of."

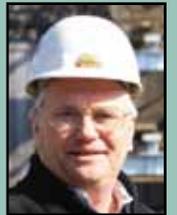
The ride is also expected to use magnetic braking and will feature three newly-designed trains from Gerstlauer Amusement Rides GmbH in Muensterhausen, Germany. The trains will feature urethane wheels.

An AT exclusive! **Fred Grubb** *discusses new Texas Giant*

Why was Rocky Mountain Construction selected as the lead supplier to deliver a new Texas Giant?

"We were selected for several reasons. Six Flags wanted to rehab the ride and create something new and exciting. Our track is innovative, revolutionary and the

Texas Giant will be the first coaster to have our new track system. Also, compared with traditional wood tracks, the maintenance costs of our new steel track will be significantly less. A smoother and faster ride will also be achieved with this new track."



Grubb

How does the new steel tracking system work, and how is it manufactured?

"The I Box track system [Iron Horse Coaster track] is fabricated by starting with flat steel plates cut into specific shapes provided by engineer Alan Schilke (Ride Centerline)

▶ See GRUBB, page 10



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►GRUBB

Continued from page 9

and is then welded together creating 3D shapes. The track rails are shaped the same as the current wood track so that we can place this track on existing coasters. The same cars can be used as well. [AT has already reported on AmusementToday.com that the Texas Giant will receive a new design of coaster trains from Germany's Gerstlauer.]

"The track is manufactured in RMC's shops in Hayden, Idaho using automated welders to ensure quality control. The track is then painted and trucked to Texas. Other coaster parts are fabricated in Idaho, trucked to Texas for galvanizing and then delivered to the job site."

How long has this technology been in development

and with whom did you work with to develop it?

"It's been in development for the past three years, and I've worked with engineer Alan Schilke (RCL) and the Six Flags engineering staff."

Who owns the rights to the technology?

"Fred Grubb and Alan Schilke have a patent pending on the technology."

Can the Texas Giant's current wooden structure support the additions of all the steel, or will the structure have to be beefed up?

"Yes, the current structure can support the new track as it weighs close to the same as the traditional wood track [9-ply, plus track steel and track bolt combined weight] and actually ties the wood structure together."

How much change will

FAST FACTS

Rocky Mountain Construction Group

Owners:

Fred Grubb and Suanne Dedmon

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E-mail: rmcgroup@live.com

Web Site: www.rocky

mtnconstruction.com

we see to the coaster's current layout and profile?

"The profile is changed significantly. The drop hill is steeper [79 degrees] and the lift hill will be higher by 10 feet [153 feet]. Banking is 95 degrees."

What will the finished product feel like to ride?

"Smoother and faster."

Tell us a brief history about yourself and Rocky Mountain Construction.

"Rocky Mountain Construction was established in 2001 by myself and Suanne Dedmon. I have been in the construction industry for more than 30 years. I began building custom homes and specialty zoo exhibits. For the past 15 years, I have been involved in the construction of all types of theme park attractions.

"I have built many exhibits for various facilities such as the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, The National Zoo and Smithsonian in Washington D.C. After building a white water raft ride for Silverwood Theme Park in North Idaho, I then turned my focus to the construction and design of theme park attractions.

"After building two wooden coasters for Silverwood Theme Park, I then went to work for Custom Coasters

International. In 2001, myself and Suanne Dedmon established RMC and began building steel and wooden coasters, water parks and other amusement park attractions.

"RMC has built and been involved in the rehab and construction of several more wooden coaster projects and has now developed a revolutionary steel track for wooden coasters that is currently being installed on the Texas Giant. After rebuilding many wood tracks, we recognized the need for a track that required less maintenance. As wood coasters continue to get larger, faster and taller, traditional wood tracks cannot withstand the forces exerted upon them. This new steel track technology requires very little maintenance and makes wood coasters a cost effective ride that will last for many years."

—Gary Slade



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"Six Flags Over Texas has a long rich history, of being a leader in the amusement industry, for installing innovative products and new designs. The selection of our steel I-Box coaster track on the new Texas Giant, is just another chapter in their 50 year history and one we are proud to be a part of."

Fred Grubb President, Rocky Mountain Construction

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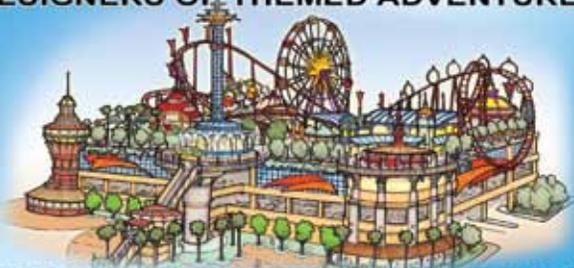
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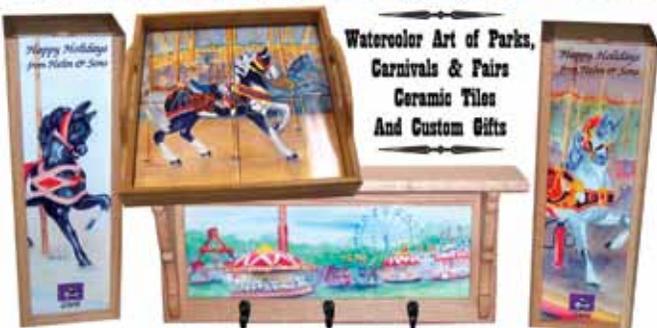
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SeaWorld San Antonio debuts new *Azul: Lure of the Sea* show

SeaWorld San Antonio has taken animal and human interaction to a new level with the premiere of a spectacular new show, *Azul: Lure of the Sea*, which made its debut on March 12.

Azul succeeds *Viva!* at the Texas marine life park's 3,000-seat Beluga Stadium and includes colorful new costumes and scenic elements, original music, enhanced sound and LED lighting along with a cast of 22 high divers, synchronized swimmers, aerialists, bungee artists and animal trainers.

But the real stars of the show will be acrobatic Pacific white-sided dolphins and graceful beluga whales. Joining them for the spectacle will be beautiful birds including brightly hued macaws and sun conures.

"Our lively new spectacle focuses on a curious 'tourist' who is transported to a land of strange and mystical air, land and sea creatures," said Dan Decker, SeaWorld San Antonio's executive vice president and general manager. "We believe our guests will truly enjoy the sights and sounds of this great adventure, just as they did when we pre-



AT PHOTOS / GARY SLADE

Azul: Lure of the Sea at SeaWorld San Antonio features new scenic elements, enhanced sound and lights, synchronized swimmers and high divers, all decked out in bright and colorful costumes seen here.

miered the totally new and exciting *Viva!* in 2001. It created a popular new wave of SeaWorld entertainment that we're taking to new depths and heights."

Azul introduces the tourist to the audience in a comical pre-show routine, Decker added, so it's important not to miss anything.

"It's a show with everything you can imagine – humor, drama and especially amazing animal and human connections," Decker said. "Every member of the family will find something to really like in '*Azul*.'"

SeaWorld San Antonio opened for the 2010 season Feb. 27.

Six Flags Great America becomes first theme park to offer MagiQuest

Six Flags Great America has confirmed that the MagiQuest, popular live-action interactive game developed to bring families together and move children from the couch to physical play, will debut at the Illinois theme park in 2010.

Players are immersed in an 8,000-square-foot fantasyland powered by a "magical" wand. The wireless remote technology unlocks more than 80 special effects allowing the player to navigate the levels of the game. Each player, called a Magi, gathers coins, powers and befriends pixies in their quest to defeat the Dragon and save the Princess.

Co-inventor Denise Weston, a mother and trained psychologist, sought to create a game that would stimulate the mind of children and promote teamwork, strategic thinking and family bonding in a fun yet educational platform. "MagiQuest is a perfect way to combine physical play and computer play while kids or the entire family work together

to solve problems and make great memories," said Denise Weston, director of imagination at MagiQuest. "The beauty of MagiQuest is that kids are engaged, challenged, learning and most importantly having fun."

MagiQuest opens this spring in the County Fair area at Six Flags Great America. Also new in 2010, the Little Dipper, a historic wooden roller coaster formerly of Kiddieland Amusement Park and Glow in the Park Parade, a new nighttime illuminated parade with Cirque Du Soleil-style music and more than 60 performers.

"We are thrilled to be adding MagiQuest to our lineup of new additions to the park for the 2010 season," said Six Flags Great America park president Hank Salemi. "We are the first theme park to launch an interactive educational family attraction of this type and are confident our guests will enjoy this new attraction the whole family can experience together."

Walt Disney World details latest Magic Kingdom expansion

Disney executives released new details in early February on exciting additions coming to Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Fla. This ambitious three-year construction project will result in the largest expansion in Magic Kingdom history.

"As Walt Disney envisioned, our theme parks are places 'where the parents and the children could have fun together.' When guests ride It's A Small World with their children and grandchildren, they remember their own Disney visits and dream and make a new shared memory. The heart of Disney magic is in Fantasyland where princesses and fairies gather, and Cinderella's Golden Carousel runs every day of the year," said Al Weiss, president of worldwide operations for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. "So you can imagine how excited we are to break ground and begin the Magic Kingdom's re-imagining of Fantasyland."

"We are in fact doubling the size of Fantasyland to

include four of your favorite princesses, said Jay Rasulo, senior executive vice president and chief financial officer of The Walt Disney Company. "Guests will meet and interact with the princesses in their very fairy tale worlds. They will be immersed in the sights, sound and magic that make each princess story so memorable."

For the first time, visitors will be able to step into their favorite Disney fairy tales to have more magical and immersive encounters with Disney princesses. Each princess will have her own themed village within Fantasyland Forest.

At Dreams Come True with Cinderella, guests can meet Cinderella face to face in her country chateau, share a dance or train to be one of her Royal Knights. At A Birthday Surprise for Sleeping Beauty, it is party time inside the Briar Rose Cottage, nestled in a lush, forest setting. The three good fairies give Aurora the Sweet 16 party she never received, and everyone's invited to join



RENDERING COURTESY WDW RESORT

Top: Dumbo's Flying Circus will be home to an attraction twice the size of the original and interactive queue. Above: Artist's rendering of Magic Kingdom expansion.

in the surprise celebration. And an enchanted mirror will transport guests from Belle's father's cottage to Beast's castle for an enchanting storytelling performance during Enchanted Tales with Belle.

The new district will also invite parkgoers to the Be Our Guest Restaurant, one of three enchanted dining rooms inside Belle's castle. And just outside the castle in Belle's Village will be Gaston's Tavern, another

themed eatery. Meanwhile, in the new Under the Sea: Journey of the Little Mermaid attraction, Ariel and all her friends will entertain in a ride-through adventure featuring favorite songs from the popular animated feature.

After visiting the princesses, guests will enjoy a newly expanded area centered around Dumbo, the most popular ride in Fantasyland. The big top comes to Dumbo's Flying Circus with a magical flight high above brand-new circus grounds, twice the size of the classic attraction, complete with a new twist on waiting in line.

While the first phase of the Fantasyland expansion will be open to Walt Disney World guests in 2012, there's plenty more in store. Rasulo added, "Someday when our vision of Fantasyland is fully realized, guests will be able to meet Tinkerbell and her friends in Pixie Hollow. They'll be shrunk to the size of a pixie and play among towering blades of grass and flowers."

Disney expansion includes more than just Magic Kingdom

The massive Fantasyland project is not the only expansion in store for the Florida segment of the Disney empire. A wave of new ships, entertainment and activities at sea are all part of a relaunch intended to bring together the world's top family destination with the worldwide leader in sports.

A magical makeover for Castaway Cay (2010)

Castaway Cay, Disney's private island paradise in the Bahamas, is getting an extra dose of pixie dust. Enhancements include an expanded family beach, a floating water platform featuring two twisting waterslides, two fresh-water play areas, a new teen retreat and 20 new private rental cabanas. The additions are scheduled to be complete by summer 2010.

New Sailings for Disney Magic and Disney Wonder (2010-11)

In 2010, the Disney Magic will sail to Europe for an unprecedented five-month season of Northern European



The Disney Dream offers the debut of AquaDuck, the first-ever shipboard water coaster, a Master Blaster from Whitewater.

IMAGES COURTESY DISNEY

and Mediterranean cruises. Book-ending the summer season of 12-night Northern European capitals cruises, the Disney Magic will once again return to the Mediterranean

for 10 and 11-night cruises, with three new ports of call – Tunis in northern Africa, the island nation of Marta, and Ajaccio, Corsica. In the summer of 2010, the Disney

Wonder will sail four and five night cruises to Nassau, Key West and Castaway Cay. In the summer of 2011, the Disney Wonder will sail for the first time to Alaska, with seven-night cruises calling on Tracy Arm, Skagway, Juneau and Ketchikan.

Disney Cruise Line expanding fleet (2011 and 2012)

The Walt Disney Company is expanding its cruise vacation business by adding two new ships, Disney Dream and Disney Fantasy, to set sail in 2011 and 2012, respectively. Two decks taller than the existing Disney Magic and Disney Wonder, the new 1,250-passenger liners will more than double the passenger capacity for Disney Cruise Line. Now under construction, the Disney Dream will offer magical innovations, engaging children's spaces, family entertainment and immersive experiences.

ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex relaunch (2010)

A re-imagining proj-

ect involving ESPN and the Disney sports complex, the leading multi-sport venue in the nation, aims to create immersive and entertaining sports experiences for athletes, coaches and fans by incorporating signature elements of ESPN in ways that will connect athletes and coaches with their favorite ESPN programs, personalities and elements.

Guests will discover a new welcome center, a digital center where video captured by 56 high-definition robotic and handheld cameras across the 220-acre sports campus is edited for display on 40 video screens and two "jumbotrons" throughout the complex as part of a veritable Wide World of SportsCenter, and the new ESPN Wide World of Sports Grill.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, technical staff will continue work in the Innovation Lab to develop ground-breaking ESPN on-air products – using the action throughout the complex as a real-world testing environment.



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BRIEF

ProSlide unveils new 'world's first' waterslides at three Great Wolf resorts

Great Wolf Resorts, Inc. unveiled its first of three new waterslides of the new year. The Triple Twist, which opened March 4 at Great Wolf Lodge at Kings Island, is a first-of-its-kind-in-the-world slide. New slides at two other resort locations opened at the end of March.

Supplied by Canada's ProSlide Technology, the Triple Twist is a five-story ProSlide Tantrum featuring a high speed drop into a huge funnel, followed by twists and turns, and two more funnels. Great Wolf Lodge in Kansas City opened its version of The Triple Twist on March 12, with Great Wolf Lodge in the Pocono Mountains scheduled to open Double Barrel Drop on March 26. The new Pocono Mountains attraction – ProSlides new Tantrum Alley – will be the first indoor waterslide of its kind in the world. The six-story adventure starts with a high speed drop into a huge funnel, a 450-degree turn into a dark vortex tunnel, and then a second funnel. All three new waterslides will include lighting and special effects to enhance the rider experience.

"We're proud to continue leading the waterpark industry in new ride innovations, like being the first in the world to have The Triple Twist," said Tim Black, executive vice president of operations. "This is only the start of a really big year for Great Wolf Lodge, and we're excited to unveil these first pieces of the puzzle just in time for spring break."

Radisson Hotel Albuquerque

New Mexico gets its first indoor waterpark

The Radisson Hotel Albuquerque recently debuted its 30,000-square-foot indoor waterpark, which opened to the public on March 12.

The waterpark's five pool features include: a 63,895-gallon lazy river and double slide plunge pool; a 298-foot-long raft slide and 237-foot-long tube slide; a 32,235-gallon kids' activity pool; a 12,577-gallon wading pool with play structure for younger children; an 8,690-gallon indoor/outdoor adult whirlpool spa; a 57,230-gallon WhiteWater West dual FlowRider; and a waterplay structure featuring a 55-gallon dump bucket, three basketball hoops, waterfalls, spray features, and inner tubes.

The hotel and waterpark facility also features Arcadia, an FEC with a 50-game video arcade that includes Art! Attack, paint your own pottery; create your own Cuddly Critter studio; Tully's Deli;



PHOTO COURTESY RADISSON HOTEL

The Radisson Hotel Albuquerque's new 30,000-square-foot indoor waterpark features numerous body/tube/raft slides, lazy river, WhiteWater West dual FlowRider and waterplay structure.

Delgado Tin Works; and Old Town Gifts & Sundries retail outlet.

"It is wonderful that we can bring this indoor waterpark to Albuquerque and the

state of New Mexico who has waited so long for this type of featured attraction for fun family entertainment rain or shine" said Jim Metzger, general manager of the Radisson

Hotel and Waterpark. "We are also pleased to note that, during these trying economic times, we've brought 60 new jobs to the Albuquerque com-

► See RADISSON, page 18

ProSlide water coaster rising at Iowa's Lost Island

Construction is on schedule at Waterloo, Iowa's Lost Island for the waterpark's 10th anniversary season and the introduction of a ProSlide HydroMagnetic Rocket water coaster. Sporting the exotic name of Wailua Kapua, which translates to purple Hawaiian river dragon, the 990-foot-long attraction will be the largest ride addition in the waterpark's history.

Though challenged by the cold winter weather and heavy Iowa winds, ProSlide crews have been working tirelessly to have the ride ready for the new season, which begins in June.

The HydroMagnetic

Rocket has many attributes of a roller coaster. Utilizing a combination of water lubrication, downhill and uphill gravity and ProSlide's proprietary HydroMagnetic technology, riders experience the acceleration of the ascent followed by the exhilarating speeds of the downhill drops.

The Lost Island ride will also feature one of the first ride-up conveyors. Instead of a series of stairs leading up to the beginning of the ride, guests will board the four-person rafts at the bottom of the first hill and ride the conveyor up to the top.

Lost Island also features other award-winning ProSlide



PHOTO COURTESY PROSLIDE

A ProSlide Hydro-Magnetic Rocket water coaster will mark the 10th anniversary season of Iowa's Lost Island in 2010.

water rides like the ProSlide Tornado, CannonBowl, OctopusRacer, and Dark Mammoth.

"Having this major, major addition to the park, and the fact that we do try to keep everything new to the guests,

we're really going to hit it this spring with a heavy marketing plan touting the 10-year anniversary to try to reach out further than we have in the past," said Eric Bertch, Lost Island's general manager.



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BRIEF

Bondholders and Six Flags reach proposal to end bankruptcy

Bondholders led by Stark Investments will take control of Six Flags Inc. under a proposal announced on March 19 that would allow the theme park operator to emerge from bankruptcy.

Six Flags attorney Paul Harner of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker said that under the proposal, the Stark group will invest \$725 million in new equity in Six Flags.

Under the proposal, bondholders will borrow \$1.1 billion. The funds will be used pay off creditors and provide working capital after the company emerges from bankruptcy. Management will have warrants and options worth up to 15 percent of the company's equity. The rest will be owned by the group led by Stark. The proposed settlement must be documented and is then subject to approval by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Christopher Sontchi.

According to *Bloomberg News*, Six Flags Chief Executive Mark Shapiro and Chief Financial Officer Jeffrey Speed will remain under the proposed settlement. Senior managers, including Shapiro and Speed, signed four-year contracts with Six Flags last year.

Ride safety training highlights NJAA Meeting

Mary Wade Burnside
Amusement Today

The New Jersey Amusement Assn.'s Annual East Coast Expo, held Feb. 24-25, was a little busier than usual this year, because time and effort had to be spent on ride safety training after the state passed a new law calling



for all parks to have certified maintenance technicians.

"It's a new regulation," said New Jersey Amusement

Assn. executive director Kimberle R. Samarelli. "It never existed before."

Enforcement will begin sometime later this year, Samarelli said, and there will be a two-year phase-in period. The training had to be either through the National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials

(NAARSO) or Amusement Industry Manufacturers & Suppliers International (AIMS). During the 15th Annual East Coast Expo, held at Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, attendees were able to get NAARSO training, Samarelli said.

About 350 people attend-
▶ See NJAA, page 23

PAPA members discuss ride safety classes, legislation

Mary Wade Burnside
Amusement Today

Members of the Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Assn. (PAPA) will continue to subsidize its annual ride safety seminar even though the group has been losing money on the classes. That decision was made during the association's annual spring meeting, held March 1 and 2 at Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Pa.

"This year, we ran a deficit of \$3,300," said Gary Chubb, senior director for maintenance at Hersheypark and a PAPA past president. "We've thought about raising fees. We've thought about getting additional sponsorships. There are so many offerings of ride seminars that we've discussed the possibility of sending letters to inspectors urging them to attend our training seminar."

A few years ago, the group changed the name of the classes from the Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar to PACE, which stands for Parks and Carnivals Education.

"When we did that, then



one of the competing seminars picked up 'Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar,' and now there is some confusion," Chubb said.

About 100 people attend the seminar and get 24 hours of training. Although ways to make the seminar more profitable were discussed, no conclusions were drawn, Chubb said.

"We just know that we'll have another seminar in November, location to be determined," he said.

The PAPA board of directors meets twice a year, once during the spring meeting and again during the summer meeting, which this year will be held July 19 and 20 at Great Wolf Lodge in Scotrun, Pa., in the Poconos.

During the March 1 board meeting, members discussed several legislative issues that can affect the Pennsylvania

amusement industry. These included supporting a uniform back-to-school date after Labor Day and opposed Gov. Ed Rendell's new sales tax plan, said president-elect Barry Kumpf of Lakemont Park in Altoona, Pa.

Plus, members also discussed the state's amusement tax, "But we are always fighting that battle," Kumpf said. "It's not imposed equally among all participants. It's a municipality tax, and some municipalities choose not to implement it."

"For instance, Logan Township (where Altoona is located) chooses to implement a 9 percent amusement tax. But there may be other parks in close proximity whose governing body, whether it's a city, township or borough, chooses not to implement a tax. So they would have some advantage."

As for Rendell's proposed sales tax, Andy Quinn, the director of community relations at Kennywood Park in West Mifflin, Pa., and PAPA's legislative committee chair, said the governor "backhandedly proposed it as a cut in the

state sales tax, but he wants to expand it to realize \$550 million more. In my mind, that's a tax increase."

In Rendell's proposal, the sales tax would be decreased from 6 percent to 4 percent. However, the list of things taxed would be expanded to include 74 more items, including many amusement-related products.

"He is going to realize more money from that sales tax," Quinn said.

PAPA has joined together with other affected entities to fight the proposal.

"We have a coalition of tourism entities that are much bigger than we are, with all the Chambers of Commerce fighting and lobbying against the change in tax," Quinn said. "The coalition of tourism entities are people like ourselves - ski areas, campgrounds and other groups. We work with visitors bureaus and chambers of commerce and doing a grassroots campaign to keep the sales tax as it is."

As for the uniform back-to-school date, PAPA supports that date as the Tuesday after

▶ See PAPA, page 24

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PEOPLE WATCH

Quassy promotes three veteran staff members

Three veteran members of the Quassy Amusement Park staff have been promoted, the Middlebury, Conn. park has announced.

"This is a solid team that has been in place for a number of years," noted park owners George Frantzis II and Eric Anderson. "They have continually cultivated group sales and generated new business even during these challenging economic times."

Audrey Brown, office manager, has been named director of outreach programs for schools and scouts. She has been with Quassy for 10 years and took over as office manager in 2007. While continuing to oversee the day-to-day operations of the park's main office, Brown is now responsible for further development of outreach programs for schools and scout groups.



Brown

Adrienne Wilson, assistant office manager, is the new director of sales for educational school fieldtrips. Wilson is in her third year with the park and will complement Brown's efforts in coordinating educational fieldtrips. She is a recent graduate of the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication processes.



Wilson

"Our free educational programs are second to none," Frantzis said. "The park is introducing an extensive hands-on project approved by the American Association of Physics Teachers this year, and thus far it has drawn a lot of attention. Audrey and Adrienne have the expertise to fully utilize all of our educational programs in the communities we serve."

Tracy Johnson, corporate events coordinator, has been promoted to sales director for themed and community service outings. A member of the park's sales staff for the past six years, she will continue to promote corporate events while taking on new challenges.



Johnson

"We have seen a dramatic spike in themed outings over the past few years, and Tracy has been at the center of those efforts," Anderson asserted. "We have branched out not only with themed outings such as Gospel Days, but community service fundraisers have had some profound impact on the use of our catered outing facilities."

Pacific Park CEO Mary Ann Powell appointed to board

Special Olympics Southern California has appointed **Mary Ann Powell**, CEO and general manager of Pacific Park in Santa Monica, Calif. and located on the Santa Monica Pier, as the newest member of its board of directors. Powell recently assumed the position and has begun the 3-year term.

Powell is past-chairman of the board of the Santa Monica Convention and Visitors Bureau and is now an officer, currently serving as secretary. She also serves on the board of directors of the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce.

"We are fortunate to have someone of Mary Ann's caliber and professional background joining us on the board," said Patrick McClenahan, chairman of the board of directors of Special Olympics Southern California. "Her business acumen coupled with her compassion for others will be a genuine asset to the organization."

Powell has spent more than 12 years taking Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier to new heights and has led the way for 14 new amusement rides and attractions.

Michael Mack joins IAAPA Europe Advisory Board

Michael Mack, member of Europa-Park's management, has been appointed to the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Europe Advisory Board.

Michael Mack, who is a board member of the German Association of Amusement Parks (VDFU) since 2008, has willingly accepted his new task to also act on a European level from now on. The IAAPA Europe Advisory Board is responsible for all European issues of IAAPA. Michael Mack has been appointed to the board due to the fact that he not only represents the leading theme park in Germany, Europa-Park in Rust, which is also among the worlds leading theme parks, but also the management of the manufacturing company Mack Rides in Waldkirch/Germany.



Mack

Riding the Market

presented by Bryan T. Pope, The Pope Firm



This information is believed to be accurate, but is not guaranteed. Returns provided do not include reinvestment or dividends.

Company	Stock Name	Prices 03/18/10	High	52 weeks Low
STOCK EXCHANGE: NYSE, OTC BB*, NASDAQ**, SYDNEY ASX***				
Cedar Fair L.P.	FUN	\$12.02	\$13.56	\$6.03
MGM Mirage	MGM	\$11.91	\$14.25	\$2.28
Six Flags, Inc.	SIXFQ**	\$0.112	\$0.59	\$0.58
CBS Corp.	CBS	\$14.37	\$14.94	\$3.65
Walt Disney Co.	DIS	\$33.78	\$33.84	\$17.08
Great Wolf Resorts, Inc.	WOLF**	\$2.87	\$3.95	\$1.71
Landry's Restaurants	LNY	\$20.92	\$22.21	\$4.18
Blackstone Group	BX	\$14.50	\$17.22	\$5.76
Village Roadshow	VLRDY***	\$10.378	\$10.379	\$2.807
NBC Universal	GE	\$18.19	\$18.40	\$9.26

Region (U.S.)	As of 3/15/10	Change from year ago
East Coast	2.948	0.855
Midwest	2.895	0.930
Gulf Coast	2.897	0.924
Rocky Mountain	2.923	0.935
West Coast	3.005	0.914
California	3.065	1.016

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Woosher Straw offers unique advertising opportunities for parks

The Woosher spinning straw has been causing quite a stir since it was launched just a few years ago. It has been highlighted as a top ten innovation along with products like the Rubik's Cube and the Dyson vacuum cleaner, and it was featured on the Discover Channel internationally. It was also selected to be in the finale of the Sky 1 prime time show *The Big Idea*, a show similar to *American Inventor*, and it featured on the BBC.

Its function is simple; the inner globe spins as the consumer drinks through the Woosher, causing the printed images inside to spin as fast as you drink. It is the only drinking straw that is an interactive advertising banner.

The product's unique ability to be used as a duel advertising platform makes it the ideal way to promote brands or jointly promote with a partner. Past examples have been Disney for the release of *Treasure Planet* with Coca-Cola, DreamWorks for the release of



PHOTO COURTESY DB PROMOTIONS

The Woosher Spinning Straw offers a unique ability to be used as a duel advertising platform.

Flushed Away in Pepsi serving Explorer, Power Rangers, Bob the Builder, and also for The Rainforest Café, The London Aquarium and many more.

The product has design registration and patent protection in the majority of the world. Patents cover 28 countries, with the USA, Canada, Australia, China and others already granted.

For further details, contact Bill Welch, DB Promotions at (434) 223-7891 or visit their Web site at: www.dbpromotions.com.

For further details, contact Bill Welch, DB Promotions at (434) 223-7891 or visit their Web site at: www.dbpromotions.com.

Innovative Leisure assist centers after wall recall

Climbing wall specialist Innovative Leisure has come to the assistance of numerous climbing centers, local authorities and other operators of climbing walls following the "stop use" notice issued by the manufacturer MSA Redpoint on their clutch auto-belay descender.

U.S. company MSA North America issued a stop use notice for all such descenders on Oct. 14, 2009, with a subsequent stop use notice update on Nov. 3, 2009, regardless of the date the unit was manufactured or last factory serviced. This course of action followed two incidents involving the failure of two separate Redpoint descender auto-belays, a controlled descent device designed specifically for the challenge course (ropes courses), climbing wall and climbing gym industry. The two incidents involved climbers experiencing rapid rates of descent resulting in injuries.

Following a thorough investigation, MSA is planning to discontinue the Redpoint descender and in doing so stated in a further stop use notice update of Dec. 4, 2009, that it will be "effectively exiting the recreational market for climbing wall auto-belay systems."

These recent incidents, the stop notice and MSA's subsequent decision to discontinue the product involved has inevitably created problems for many operators, with those affected now searching for an alternative, replacement system. As a result, Innovative Leisure has been inundated with inquiries and requests for assistance and, with many years of experience in both operating and supplying hydraulic auto-belay systems to customers throughout the U.K. and Europe, backed by U.S. manufacturer Spectrum Sports International, is offering a proven alternative to the Redpoint descender.

"This situation has obviously caused serious problems for operators of climbing walls, climbing centers and other venues," said Innovative Leisure Managing Director Phil Pickersgill. "In the U.K., the Health and Safety Executive has also issued a prohibition notice in addition to the manufacturer's stop use notice so operators are now looking for an alternative system to enable them to keep operating. In many cases the operator does not have staff suitably qualified to use manual belays and so their operation has effectively ground to a halt. Auto-belays are essential for many operators offering an introduction to climbing and for events such as kids' parties where staff costs, and ratios to guests, have to be commercially viable.

Additional information can be found at www.innovativeleisure.co.uk.



PHOTO COURTESY INNOVATIVE LEISURE

Climbing wall operators are turning to Innovative Leisure for their products after a recall of MSA Redpoint's clutch auto-belay descender.

SeaWorld Orlando update

Investigations continue in SeaWorld trainer's death

Pam Sherborne
Amusement Today

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CARTOON...PAGE 2

In mid-March the continuing saga of Tilikum, the 30-year-old orca which was responsible for the tragic death of a SeaWorld, Orlando, Fla., trainer Feb. 24, was no where near coming to an end.

In fact, SeaWorld administrators declined even to discuss the park's crisis management plan because the park was still very much in it. It could be a very long before park officials will be able to sit down and assess how everything was handled.

Yet, they are continuing to handle it, fielding questions from local and international news agencies, as well as animal activist groups and the patrons that are still very much wanting to see the orca shows.

The Feb. 24 death of Dawn Brancheau following a show performed by several of the park's orcas including Tilikum, or killer whales as they are known, was still being investigated in mid-March by local Orange County authorities, by OSHA (Occupational Health and Safety Administration) and, internally, by SeaWorld staff and independent marine mammal experts.

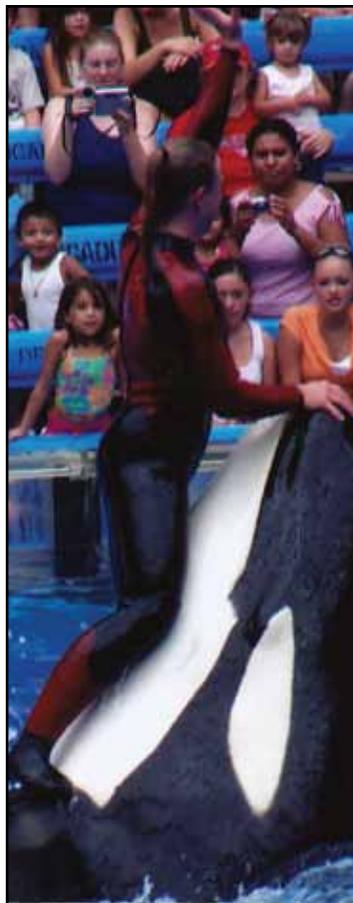
Cause of death was determined shortly after the accident by the Orange County Sheriff's Office as "multiple

traumatic injuries and drowning" after Tilikum, the 12,000-pound orca that has sired multiple calves since arriving at SeaWorld, pulled Brancheau into the water.

Investigations on the exact way it happened and perhaps why was still pending in mid-March. The incident was captured on surveillance tapes at SeaWorld, which were handed over to Orange County Sheriff's officials. According to state laws, those tapes will be made public once the investigation is concluded. However, Brancheau's family, along with the support of SeaWorld, was gearing up last month for a legal battle to prevent that video footage from appearing online or on television.

SeaWorld suspended its "Shamu Believe" show for three days following the tragedy, but re-initiated it again on Feb. 27. SeaWorld also suspended the practice of trainers performing in-pool with the animals and that suspension was to continue until the investigations concluded. Then, SeaWorld plans to make a determination whether that becomes a permanent policy.

"We have initiated a thorough review of all of the procedures that guide our interac-



AT FILE PHOTO

Since the accidental death of a whale trainer at SeaWorld Orlando on Feb. 24, trainers have not been allowed back in the water with the orcas.

tion with killer whales," said Fred Jacobs, vice president of communications, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, on March 12. "This review is being conducted by a team that includes both our own

staff and independent marine mammal experts. There are no details to share at this point, but we will make our findings known in due course."

One of the performances during the orca shows at SeaWorld has trainers coming up out of the water on the nose of the orcas, then diving into the water.

However, Tilikum was not a "water-work" animal, i.e., trainers were forbidden from swimming with him because of his massive size and history (Tilikum had been linked to two other deaths while in captivity), according to a story from OrlandoSentinel.com, the online version of the local Orlando newspaper. He did participate by performing tricks on command, including splashing the audience with his tail.

SeaWorld has pulled Tilikum from all shows until investigations are over.

Around the world, other marine life parks declined to specifically address the incident at SeaWorld, but did give their policies regarding their trainers being in-pool with orcas. For example, when Marineland Niagara Falls was contacted by a reporter, a company spokeswoman stated they had stopped performances with trainers and whales 12 years ago when the park opened its viewing facility called Friendship Cove.

"We don't do routines with the killer whales any more like we used to," Ann Marie Rondinelli, the park's marketing office manager, was quoted as saying in *The Niagara Falls Review*.

Nancy Chan, Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, Vallejo, Calif., said that park has one orca, a 17-year-old female named Shouka. It is their policy that trainers not go in-water with Shouka.

"We have standard operating procedures and safety protocols in place and those policies are continually reviewed and, if necessary, modified," Chan said. "Our trainers do not go in-water with Shouka and that remains our policy."

When news of the tragedy hit Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, Chan said it hit hard.

"This was an unspeakable tragedy and for our staff, obviously, this was a very personal loss, since the trainer community is very small and tight knit," she said. "We followed our standard policy of not commenting on incidences at other facilities and simply issued a brief statement extending our condolences to the staff and family of the SeaWorld trainer."

The Sea World park, located along Australia's Gold Coast, Sydney, and not affiliated with the U.S. SeaWorld, doesn't house any orcas.



NEWS & NOTES

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AIMS seeks volunteer instructors

AIMS is seeking instructor assistance in the following areas for the next AIMS Safety Seminar to be held at the Orlando Convention Center from November 13-18, 2010.

Instructors are needed for: Air and Water Quality; Hydraulic and Pneumatics; Electrical; Fall Protection; Confined Spaces; Generators; FEC; ADA and Carnival related classes.

If you are interested in helping to teach in any of these subject areas please contact either:

Patty Beazley at Beazleyp@comcast.net or

Gina Claassen at gclaassen@silverdollarcity.com.

AIMS introduces new inspectors certification program

Mark Moore
Uremet Corp.
AIMS president
mark@uremet.com

For almost 40 years, AIMS International and its predecessor AREA have been proud to provide the only worldwide certification program for maintenance and operations. During the past decade, AIMS International has administered more than 1,000 certification tests, and its certification program has expanded to include waterpark operations, online courses for recertification and an accreditation program for in-house training programs. Now AIMS is adding an inspector certification program which will allow AIMS to provide a complete array of high quality training in all the major areas of the amusement industry.



Moore

The inspector certification program will include 40 hours of specialized instruction which will include general courses in wood and steel coaster inspection and facilities inspection. It will also include specific courses such as fasteners and bearings and non-destructive testing and individual ASTM standards. The certification will

require not only a written exam, but may also include practical and oral examinations.

The new inspector certification will be offered for the first time this November at the annual AIMS Safety Seminar in Orlando Florida. The seminar will be held in conjunction with the 2010 IAAPA Attractions Expo and will provide candidates with a unique opportunity to train with front line technicians and operators, while also being able to visit ride manufacturers and suppliers exhibiting at the four-day trade show.

AIMS International is dedicated to providing the most comprehensive certification and examination process available in the amusement industry; its certification program is designed to test the knowledge of individuals working in various fields throughout the amusement industry. As a professional, achieving AIMS certification demonstrates their dedication to safety, and their knowledge of general activities and technologies that are an integral part of their daily amusement ride safety program. Those individuals who achieve the highest levels of certification are as valued professionals who are recognized for their years of experience, and their dedication and service in the amusement industry.

AIMS works with many organizations to provide latest in safety information

To provide the very latest in safety bulletins and regulations to its students during the annual safety seminar, AIMS International works with various organizations that provide codes and standards that are used in the amusement industry. They include:

American Welding Society (AWS)

AWS, founded in 1919, has a goal to advance the science, technology and application of welding and related joining disciplines. AWS issues different code books relating to different aspects of welding and which would directly be used in the manufacturing and repair of welds on amusement rides and devices.

These codes include AWS D1.1, "Structural Welding Code-Steel", AWS D1.2, "Structural Welding Code-Aluminum", and ASW D1.3, "Structural Welding Code-Sheet Steel." Each of these code books outlines quality of acceptable welds and welder qualification testing guidelines.

AWS also provides different certification programs such as the Certified Welding Inspector (CWI) program. These programs have been a major contributor to the overall quality of welds in the amusement industry.

• www.aws.org

National Fire Protection Association

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), established in 1896, is an international organization with a mission to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life. This is done through advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.

There are more than 75,000 members worldwide who are responsible for 300 codes and standards. One of the most widely used of these codes is NFPA 70, the National Electric Code. This code outlines the design and use parameters of electrical circuits.

All persons doing electrical work in the amusement industry should be familiar with the different aspects of this code.

• www.nfpa.org

American Society of Nondestructive Testing (ASNT)

Nondestructive testing (NDT) is a means of determining the quality of a part without causing physical harm to that part. ASNT helps to create a safer world by serving the NDT professionals and promoting the different NDT technologies through publishing, certification, research and conferences.

All NDT inspectors must be certified in accordance with SNT-TC-1A which outlines the educational level and experience as well as other qualifications needed to obtain specific levels of expertise.

Different levels of NDT certification include Level I, II and III with most field work being done by the Level II. ASNT directly certifies Level III candidates through a series of tests. Different methods of NDT can be used at different times during the fabrication and/or operation of an amusement ride or device to help insure that it meets quality specifications.

• www.asnt.org

ASTM International

ASTM International is one of the largest voluntary standards development organizations in the world. First started in 1898, this association is responsible for the development and issuing of different standards that directly affect the amusement industry.

These standards fall under the responsibility of F24 and cover such topics as operations, maintenance, design, manufacturing, and quality assurance programs. All amusement ride and device standards are published in an annual book titled volume 15.07, "General Products, Chemical Specialties, and End Use Products." It is available through ASTM's Web site.

The amusement ride standards are also available in a separate virtual compilation titled ASTM Standards on Amusement Rides and Devices: 8th Edition (English, Spanish and French editions). For additional information, please visit <http://www.astm.org/DEMO/rides.html>.

Membership is \$75 annually for individuals with two meetings a year devoted to the writing of amusement ride and device standards. All AIMS members are encouraged to be active in ASTM.

For additional information on standards or membership contact our ASTM technical committee director, Len Morrissey at lmorris@astm.org or (610) 832-9719.

• www.astm.org

► **NJAA**

Continued from page 19

ed the meeting, Samarelli said, and 60 vendors operated more than 100 booths.

Designated amusement park employees must have 32 hours of training within two years, she added.

"We run 16 to 20 hours CEU – continuing education units," she said. "That's what they have to have, and then after they pass the test, they are certified."

Larry Zucker, the association's legal counsel, noted that two ride safety seminars were held. He led the first one, which was on the topic of signage.

"In the past, operators have called me and asked, 'What are all the signs we need?'" Zucker said. "When you went through the state regulations, the signage requirements were spread out all over the place. Regulations were not in one central location that was easily accessible.

"For example, height requirements. Where it talks about height requirements is in one section and weight requirements are in another section. The requirements were all spread out and too easy to miss unless you took a comprehensive view of all the regulations."

So Zucker pulled together all the information and presented to attendees a memo "that laid them out in logical flow, where everything is located in the regulations," he said.

"I also talked about how safety is a shared responsibility," he added. "I really like that theme. It emphasizes the need for parents and children and guests to do their part, that safety is a partnership. Signage is the operator telling the patron to act responsibly. It tells parents to keep an eye on their children and don't let them out of sight. Operators and employees can't do everything."

After Zucker's signage seminar, another ride workshop was presented by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, presenting an annual review of regulations as well as new enforcement policies.

"We have a unique system in New Jersey," Zucker said. "The Department of Community Affairs has engineers that review the design of all rides. Before they come into the state, they have full-time inspectors that inspect all rides. We don't have a system of third-party inspection in New Jersey."

The state, Zucker said,

has become the second after Massachusetts to require the training and certification of maintenance workers.

Another topic covered in this seminar was how amusement parks should handle changing the LED lights on a ride and when making such changes would require approval from the state.

"Many parks are putting up LED lights, in many cases, retrofitting rides," Zucker said. "It's greener technology to use

and the cost of operating a ride goes way down when you use LED lighting."

But the Department of Community Affairs wants to make sure that a ride is not changed structurally when these retrofittings take place.

"What they did was put out a flow chart which will tell operators how that takes place and what criteria they need to use to determine if they need to get DCA approval. If the change is like for like, that's not a mate-

rial change and they don't need to go to the DCA if the change is approved by the ride manufacturer. But they want to see any third-party LED lighting fixtures that are appended to rides."

The third major item covered in the seminar was the filling out of safety sheets, a one-time process in which the operator goes through the manual and prepares a sheet that features some "essential safety information, such as what does

the operator do, how does the operator operate the ride, who to call in case of emergency," Zucker said.

The ride safety seminars made up the bulk of the Expo, Samarelli said. The association's annual meeting is held at the International Assn. of Amusement Park and Attractions convention in November, and a dinner/dance will be held May 10 at the Ram's Head Inn in Absecon, N.J.

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► **PAPA**

Continued from page 19

Labor Day, not only to help attendance, but also to keep park workforces from leaving before the summer season is over.

"We get a tremendous amount of folks the week before Labor Day, but 95 percent of schools have gone back to school," said Chubb of Hersheypark.

He estimated that about 50 percent of the summer workforce employees attend school.

Another legislative item discussed during the meeting, Quinn said, was a pro-

posal that would require any restaurants or eating establishments that gross more than \$500,000 a year to list all ingredients of food items in a visible place.

For instance, at Kennywood, Quinn said, this would affect some stands but not others, although all food providers are in-house. Because the food establishments do not have menus, ingredients would have to be listed on a signboard.

"We're not opposed to it, but we're not rushing to have it done," he said. "We would have to coat the back wall (of each stand) with menu items. It's not something we really want, but it's not something

that would be incredibly tough. It's just another layer of government bureaucracy that we don't need at this time. If you ask, we will give you the ingredients. We just don't want to be required to post them."

In addition to the board meeting, members also attended a breakfast on March 2 that featured speakers Charlie Bray, president and CEO of the International Assn. of Amusement Parks and Attractions, and John Dillabaugh, the director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Ride and Measurement Standards with the Department of Agriculture, Kumpf said.

Gateway Ticketing announces 2010 User Group meeting dates

Following the success of its 2009 User Group meeting, Gateway Ticketing Systems, Inc., has announced that the 2010 User Group meeting will be hosted by California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco Aug. 23 – 27, 2010.

"We're really excited that California Academy of Sciences is hosting the 2010 meeting," said Cheryl Hillen, customer service manager at Gateway Ticketing Systems and organizer of the event. "They're a great customer and the facility is spectacular. The 2009 meeting was a huge success and we know this year will continue in that tradition."

"As a partner of Gateway Ticketing Systems and a newer member of the user community, the California Academy of Sciences is proud to collaborate and host this year's Galaxy User Conference," said Kim Le, director of I.T. at California Academy of Sciences. "We look forward to Galaxy's product enhancements and the exchange of ideas as we all strive to advance our ticketing solutions."

The annual User Group meeting focuses on Gateway customers and gives them an opportunity to share their experiences with each other. Gateway also uses this meeting to provide the attendees with the latest information and enhancements about Galaxy, the company's flagship product.

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Strawberry Festival on par at mid-fair

The Strawberry Festival, Plant City, Fla., was up 15 percent across the board mid-fair and with a lot of fair left, Paul Davis, fair general manager, hoped that would remain.

Davis told *AT* at press time that the event, which ran March 4-14, started out with a few cool days, but the weather improved after that and had been very good.

"We are expecting rain over the next couple of days," Davis said, March 10. "But, we hope to close at least on par with 2009."

Attendance at last year's fair was about 557,000.

Not far away, an unusual cold and rainy weather February this year dropped attendance at the Florida State Fair, Tampa, Feb. 4-15, by 25 percent to an unaudited total of about 354,000.

"But, so far, our fair is really going great," Davis said.

Belle City Amusements, Deltona, Fla., provided the midway for the fair. The show fielded about 90 rides including several new ones to the Strawberry Festival, such as Zamperla's Disko, Remix (Tivoli), Inversion (KMG), and the Avalanche (Mack).

This was the 75th annual Strawberry Festival. Look for complete fair coverage in the May issue.

Tennessee State Fair alive again, set for Sept. 10-19

Pam Sherborne
Amusement Today

Rockhouse Partners, Nashville, Tenn., and North American Midway Entertainment (NAME) announced a partnership last month that brings the Tennessee State Fair back to life.

The fair, it seemed in all likelihood, had met its demise last fall when Nashville Mayor Karl Dean decided it wasn't to the city's benefit to continue to support the annual event. Although called a state fair, the Tennessee event

was held on land owned by Nashville. The city is in the process of deciding the best uses for the land.

But, in the meantime, Rockhouse Partners, a technology-based entertainment agency focused on sponsorship creation activation, and measurement for the music and sports industries, along with NAME, will lease the state fairgrounds property for the 2010 event, set for Sept. 10-19. Last year, it was held Sept. 11-20.

The event will continue to use the

name Tennessee State Fair, according to Chrysty Fortner, Rockhouse Partners' director of fairs and festivals. Fortner had been the director of marketing and communications for the "old" Tennessee State Fair.

"We're working diligently with our creative team to brand this fair and redesign the logo," Fortner said. "With the decision only occurring yesterday (March 9), we're moving at lightning speed, but yes, we will continue calling

► See TENN, page 29

Carnival Profile

Butler Amusements continues growth in west coast operations

Pam Sherborne
Amusement Today

Earl "Butch" Butler, Butler Amusements, Fairfield, Calif., wasn't born into the outdoor amusement industry.

But, after being there for more than 40 years, he is successful, continues to grow and has added another generation, his family, into the business. He remains optimistic and is very much looking forward to a prosperous 2010.

"I'm gung-ho for 2010," he said. "I think it will be a very strong year. If we get the weather, we will do great."

He has done everything and more to make sure that is true. He has 35 fairs and 69 events on the books this year, said Andrea Owen, who works in one of his offices and helps with coordinating bookings.



Butler



PHOTO COURTESY BUTLER AMUSEMENTS

Butler Amusements, Fairfield, Calif., added about 16 rides to its arsenal in 2009 and has plans for more enhancements as 2010 goes on.

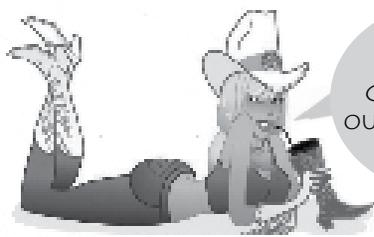
He purchased 16 rides in 2009, as well as seven tractors and six buses. He took two Scramblers to Eli Bridge Co.

for renovations. He expects to receive delivery on a brand new entrance sometime at the end of this month (April).

"It is 60 feet across the top and will be equipped with LED lighting," he said. "It will

► See BUTLER, page 26

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► BUTLER

Continued from page 25

be remarkable."

Butler grew up in Austin, Minnesota, in a family that owned and operated a grocery store business. His father, George "Bud" Butler purchased a small game and began booking it into small community events. Butler said he was 13 years old at the time.

"He bought a few more games, then purchased an umbrella ride from Aerial Affiliates," Butler said. "He ended up taking it out to California because, at that time, you couldn't operate a ride in the winter in Minnesota."

That ride turned out to be very successful. Then, in 1967, his dad called and asked him if wanted to partner with him on a ride. It was a Swinging Gym manufactured by Amusements Unlimited. Butler had been running the grocery store fulltime by himself, picking up business knowledge and skills.

Butler took a leap of faith, sold his business, sold his house and moved his young family to California.

"That ride, as it turned out, was banned because of the number of ride accidents," Butler said.

Yet, the success it led to is history.

Last year hasn't been the only large ride purchase year for Butler. For example, Butler purchased 13 rides in 1990, 16 in 1991, and 10 in 2001.

His 2009 ride purchase included:

- WindSurfer by Wisdom, a ride he bought brand new;
- Moonwalk, by Pat Boyle, brand new;
- U-Toob funhouse, Pat Boyle, brand new;
- Nitro by Zamperla, from a park in Massachusetts;
- Orbiter, Tivoli from Fun Forest, Seattle, Wash.;
- Musik Express, S.D.I., from Fun Forest;
- Jet Spin, F.D.C., from Fun Forest;
- Three rides from John Vetrus, Salem, Ore.: the Turbo Force, Zamperla, a sky lift and a 12-lane slide. The sky lift is a stationary ride that will be a permanent fixture at the Evergreen State Fair, Monroe, Wash. He has a 10-year contract there. The slide will be a permanent fixture at the California State Fair, Sacramento.
- Six rides from the defunct Michael Jackson's Neverland

Ranch. They were Zamperla's Lolli Swing; Umbrella Jeep, Zamperla; Bumper cars, Majestic; Dinos Elephant, Zamperla; Balloon Samba, Zamperla; and Wisdom's Dragon Wagon.

Other than the 2009 ride purchases, Butler has many other reasons to be optimistic in 2010. Here are some:

- He has already signed one new fair this year, the San Mateo (Calif.) Co. Exposition and Fair, set for June 12-20, 2010.

- Another new event was the Chandler (Ariz.) Ostrich Festival. That festival ran March 12-14, 2010, at which a record gross was set.

- He played the Garden Grove (Calif.) Strawberry Festival for the first time last year and set a record gross there. That festival will run this year May 28-31.

- Butler plays a six-week spot in San Jose, Calif. It is a holiday event downtown San Jose called Winter Wonderland. He set up 22 rides there this year and set a gross there.

- He now has two winter quarters, one in Santa Nella Calif., and the other about 15 miles south. That latter location was purchased in 2008. It encompasses 20 acres and is being managed by Mike Cintori. The Santa Nella winter quarters location is managed by Bill Redford. Redford was an art major and is responsible for painting the rides.

- Jerry and Susan Hill joined his show last year with their cookhouse. Butler said that has been a great addition.

And, the list could go on and on. He normally runs about four units during the fair-heavy part of the season, breaking up into as many as six or seven during the spring. This year, he did reduce the number of dates that one of his units will do. He normally sends a unit to Oregon and Washington for about 40 dates. Those dates have been reduced to eight for 2010.

"It just became more expensive to operate that route compared to the money we were taking in," he said.

Some changes to his route in 2010 are due to the California State Fair deciding to play July 14-Aug. 1 this year instead of its traditional dates of mid-August through the first of September. The 2009 dates were Aug. 21-Sept. 7. Fair officials hoped this would allow more school students

and families to take advantage of the event.

Because of those changes, three of Butler's other fairs also will change dates to accommodate that move. Those fairs are: the Solano Co. Fair, Vallejo, Calif., will run June 23-27 in 2010, compared to July 22-26, 2009; the Stanislaus Co. Fair, Turlock, Calif., will run July 16-25 compared to July 31-August 9, 2009; and Redwood Empire Fair, Ukiah, set for Aug.

Another change on the Butler midway involves his game concessionaires. Those concessionaires have been hit by the downturn in economy.

"People are not spending the money to play games as much," Butler said. "Games are disappearing."

So, instead of paying a privilege, some of his concessionaires that book onto his shows will pay 25 percent.

"If I have a game concessionaire paying me a \$400 privilege and they make \$500, well they aren't grossing very much," he said. "Those concessionaires with the percentage variety games are also being given the chance to put up other types of games. It is hard for a patron to figure out what game to play because they may walk the midway and pass six or seven of the same type games."

In March, Butler had already tried this at the Riverside Co. Fair and Date Festival in February and hoped he would be able to implement this change for the remainder of 2010.

Principal administrators in Butler's show include: Tami (his daughter) and Ron Quint, in charge of trucking; Kelley Butler (his daughter) office; Kris (his daughter) and Mick Brajavich, who runs a unit; Jill (his daughter) and Lance Moyer, runs a unit; Cecil Rhodes, runs a unit; Rich Byrum, in charge of booking; Tom Shobaken, in charge of the Beaverton, Ore., office, handling insurance, legal matters, etc., ("I grew up with Tom. He lived across the street. His name is the first one I remember."); Jimmy Hall, assistant unit manager, and, as a certified ride inspector works with the state, has worked with Butler in helping to look at some of the state's laws; Tom Yentsch, lays out most of the lots; Billy Truax, ride supervisor, and Mary Rhodes, Karla Kinzel and Sally Shaffer, office.

Reithoffer Shows - still going strong

B. Derek Shaw
Amusement Today

Rick Reithoffer feels 2009 was a decent year for his show, despite the economy. The biggest ride that was added to Reithoffer Shows, Inc. was a Zamperla Sky Flyer, a 100-plus-foot swing ride. Their ride operated, as an independent attraction, at the two-week Minnesota State Fair this summer, exceeding expectations. "It was a great operation," said Rick. The Sky Flyer normally is part of the blue unit.

The midway operator also took possession of a Wisdom Himalaya. He and his brother Pat ordered the metallic orange ride some time back, taking delivery at the Perry, Ga. fair. "Victor tried to talk me out of the colors. We are thrilled with that ride." It is part of Reithoffer's orange unit.

The show has made a huge commitment to going green. This is evident with midway, concession and ride lighting, using halites (halogen) and L.E.D. lighting.

There were many refurbishments in both units this season including the Tidal Wave, Tug Boats, Crazy Bus, Demolition Derby (in the blue unit) and Zipper and Tilt-A-Whirl (in the orange unit). However the Gentle Giant Ferris Wheel is the star re-do. All the sweeps were cleaned and painted. All the lights were stripped off and replaced with 52,000 LED lights. The lighting package can now run basically with a lamp cord. "The only thing we don't have, is a payment book," quipped Rick about this refurb. He continued, "I'm still blown away about how gorgeous it is and how it is the focal point on the midway."

For the York, Pa. Fair, Reithoffer did a complete new layout with the Wheel being at the front of the ride midway. This is all part of a bigger plan being instituted by Mike Froelich, York Fair general manager. "York is evolving into a brand new modern midway. Mike is doing a marvelous job on what the York Fair is going to be - he's not done yet."

Even Rick's college-age sons were part of the team this summer. Both Ricky and Matthew are involved with the management along with

set-up and tear-down. "Ricky is evolving into a valuable showman on the Reithoffer Shows and brother Matthew is right on his heels."

Some foreign help was utilized this season, mostly from Mexico. Rick says they are hard workers, sending money back home, however with unemployment so high in the U.S., Reithoffer Shows wanted to use local people,

when possible. Unfortunately Americans don't want to use their own two hands and stay on the road.

What positions Reithoffer Shows at or near the top of

► See REITHOFFER, page 28

A view of Reithoffer's midway setup as seen at the York Fair. PHOTO COURTESY B. DEREK SHAW



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Second KMG Monster delivered to Switzerland

The latest KMG giant transportable swing ride named "Monster" (model XXL) was expected to be delivered to showman H.P. Maier, in Switzerland last month.

The ride was to be approved by the German Tuv before delivery.

P.M. Theunisz, KMG sales manager, said this was Maier's ninth KMG ride since 1992, when he bought the Discovery.

"At the moment, Maier owns a Fire Ball and an Inversion," Theunisz said. "He is aiming for a spot at the Munich Oktoberfest 2010 with the Monster and, therefore, he adapted the ride design a little bit so it has the blue squares on the towers which look like the German Bayern flag."

This is the second XXL model for KMG and the third is under construction for Belgium showman Jack Dotremont.

The ride is mounted on three semi-trailers and can be set up without a crane (six hours and four persons). Standard features include all stainless steel fences, wireless remote control for set up hydraulics, stainless steel electrical cabinets, full (power) LED lighting package, integrated Hofman Sound system, many logo's with LED lighting and more.



PHOTO COURTESY KMG
This is KMG's second Monster ride. It was delivered to Switzerland showman H.P. Maier.

The Monster holds 20 persons per ride cycle, swings 148 feet high (45 meters) and has a footprint of 42 by 59 feet (13 by 18 meters).

—Pam Sherborne

►REITHOFFER

Continued from page 27

the midway scene, is their wide selection of attractions and ability to secure rides no one else has. Pat Reithoffer, Sr. was an innovator in the business, bringing many rides to America, many times two – three years ahead of the competition. "We want to continue in that vein," says Rick. "The competition is going to have to try and catch us."

His father infected him with the ride bug, visiting the European ride manufacturers direct. Today the manufacturers ask questions of Rick, seeking his input.

Rick feels the fair industry is somewhat recession-proof. People still want to visit their local fairs. "We are still one of the best values for great family entertainment at an affordable price."

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MINI-SHOT TOWER (Zamperla/2003)

► **TENN**

Continued from page 25

ourselves the Tennessee State Fair and tennessestatefair.org will remain the Web site address."

As far as where the event will be held in 2011, Fortner only said: "We are entering into a lease for property beginning August 31, 2010 through Sept. 22nd, 2010. Of course, our plans are to use this successful 2010 event as a springboard to the continuation into 2011 and beyond."

North American Midway Entertainment is also looking forward to another Tennessee State Fair.

"North American Midway Entertainment is extremely excited to revive and continue delivering the best in midway entertainment to the Tennessee State Fair in 2010," said Mike Williams, CEO North American Midway Entertainment.

Williams said NAME has worked diligently with Rockhouse Partners and Tennessee Farm Bureau to continue "this great event with the best-in-class family and community entertainment and education."

"In 2009, North American Midway Entertainment and the State Fair of Tennessee provided a new and prestige State Fair experience for fairgoers," said Amber Swedgan, director of media and communications, NAME. "In return, we were flooded with positive feedback and praise. In 2010, we are looking to take that experience to an even higher level with the renewed community focus and enthusiastic leadership of our combined team."

And, organizers plan to continue the agricultural component.

"We are committed to continuing the 104 year old traditions and competitions," Fortner said. "Youth in agriculture is very important to all of us."

Rockhouse Partners will meet with the 2009 Livestock Advisory Committee to begin planning that part of the event. The group plans to enhance charitable giving and community-focused social responsibility. Along those lines, the State Fair of Tennessee will work with the Tennessee Farm Bureau in setting up a 501(c)(3) organization to engage the community and manage all charitable activities.

Rockhouse Partners are in the planning stages of a music/concert series and will

make announcements on that portion in the coming weeks.

"The event represents a tremendous opportunity in terms of Tennessee heritage, music, education, and agriculture," Fortner said. "The vision for the Tennessee State Fair is a partner-driven approach with a renewed focus on children's programs, live music, and positive initiatives like green energy. Also look for exciting social media and digital integration into this years' outreach."

North American Midway Entertainment along with Rockhouse Partners, Nashville, are bringing the Tennessee State Fair, Nashville, back in 2010.

Here is a photo of the NAME midway during the 2009 event.

PHOTO COURTESY NAME



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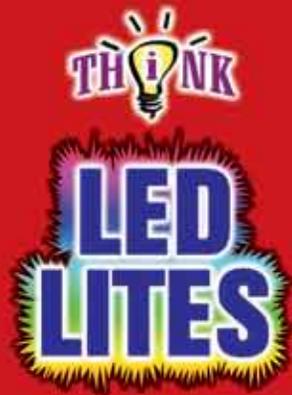
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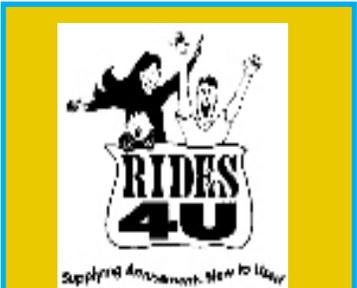
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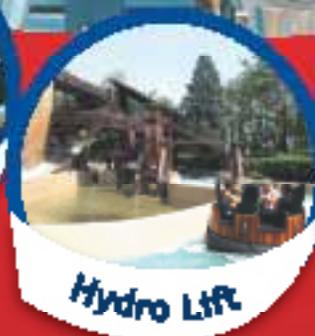
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