

The Fun Times

Your Guide to Amusement Industry Products and Services by Automated Batting Cages/J&J Amusements/Fun Parts Xpress

October 2003

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Its The Fall Trade Show Season!

Come see all our new products at IAAPA (International Association of Amusement Parks and attractions). This is the largest trade show in the world for anything related to amusements, everything from hot dog stands to roller coasters will be there. The trade show begins November 19th and ends November 22nd.

FPX (Fun Parts Xpress) will be in booth 334. J&J Amusements will be in booth 2234 and Automated Batting Cages will be in booth 2034.

If you haven't seen our new products lately, you'll be in for a surprise. ABC has introduced a new attraction with the addition of soccer kicking machines based around ABC's time tested automated baseball and softball system. J&J has introduced another great double seat go-kart...the King Scorpion, and FPX keeps adding new products every week.

To make the best use of your time, map us out online and print it, then bring it to the show. Visit <http://www.iaapaorlando.com>

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Letters to the Editor

The Funtimes welcomes all readers written comments, questions, and suggestions regarding any aspect of the Newsletter. We reserve the right to edit your letter and all letters must include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Direct all correspondence (by mail or electronically) to Letters to the Editor.

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What a Great idea!

Do you have a big appetite for saving lots of money? Well, I have the answer for you. It's all about the parts you buy and the shipping you pay.

With this in mind, why not get the parts you know and trust from a top-notch supplier? At Fun Parts Xpress we take pride in offering you our industry-leading parts and service. Our service manager, Kevin Bell, who has been active in the amusement industry for almost two decades, heads this up. His goal has been to make sure that each and every facility runs smooth as silk. He is committed and determined to solving problems that arise in your day-to-day operations. When you combine that kind of dedication with our outstanding customer service, you can't go wrong.



Buy the kit and save time and \$\$\$

We consistently make sure that our customers receive their packages A.S.A.P. We even recently bought a new tool for shipping smaller items. Our Insta-Pack machine will help ensure that your orders do not have missing screws, bolts, seals, or any other small parts. In the past these are the very items that seem to disappear in the unpacking stage of shipping. We feel that this will eliminate that problem.

We also have some great shipping partners in UPS, Fed-Ex, and several national trucking companies like Roadway, Overnight, as well as Fed-Ex Freight to help us expedite the process. We do this to insure safe, efficient, and most of all timely service. Not to mention that by using all of these companies allows us to get the very best possible rates. All savings we receive get passed directly on to you, the customer. This is our way of letting you know how much we appreciate your business, and we look forward to maintaining a friendly, working partnership for years to come. I know that by giving us a chance you won't be disappointed. What are you waiting for? Lets have fun and make some money.

The man with a plan

A candid interview with one of the industry pioneers, Bill Rameson.



Bill Rameson

Bill Rameson has been a valued customer of J&J and ABC for over twenty-five years. Always creative and quick to share, Bill exemplifies what is best in the family entertainment industry. He began building parks in the early '70s with his brother Ron and now, thirty years later he works with his son Erik and daughter Allwyn building new parks.

More than thirty years ago, Rameson was a stockbroker with a client involved in the amusement industry. Rameson made a trip with his client down to the client's new park on Firestone blvd. in Norwalk and was struck by the popularity of the facility. "My first indication that it might be a good business," he says, "was that we couldn't find any parking spots." Rameson, his brother and several friends formed a limited partnership to build the North Hollywood, Sherman Oaks and Redondo parks.

Sherman Oaks, Rameson remembers, "was tumbleweeds in a flood plain" when construction began. In order to put any buildings on the land, Rameson needed to raise the ground level ten feet. The solution came to him while he drove along Ventura Boulevard. "They were excavating some subterranean parking lots and having to pay to take the dirt to the dump," he recalls, "I said, 'Hey, give it to me.' Then I built a winding rock walkway and a moat and lo and behold, we had a medieval castle ten feet above the ground."

After successfully completing the North Hollywood, Sherman Oaks and Redondo parks, Rameson sold them to get into the restaurant business, a venture he remembers as one of the "downs" in his amusement industry's ups and downs. "We built thirteen Chuck E. Cheese style restaurants in five months, which wasn't the right thing to do. It was a superhuman feat to build thirteen in five months. In those days, we spent twenty million bucks doing that, and they were good for a while but they quickly fell off and frankly, we didn't have the best locations."

In the late eighties, Rameson and partners began building parks again from scratch. They built seven parks, named the "Camelot" group through the late 80's and early 90's. "About '97," says Rameson, "I got the idea of a rollup," and went to various prospective investors within the industry as potential investors. Rameson managed to pull together more than forty million dollars to purchase various parks – eighteen in all – and Palace Entertainment was born.

Over the years, Rameson's projects have been innovative and industry-changing. "We were one of the first to put laser tag in with Family Entertainment," he recalls. "We increased in most locations party and group space because most of these facilities were built with very little extra space to them." Innovations in Rameson's recent projects have included skateboard parks, thrill

rides and paint ball. Overall, though, Rameson says his biggest accomplishment has been in sales growth and fundraising for acquisitions. "Palace has collectively raised about 250 million and in this industry, that's an accomplishment," he points out. "I think the acquisitions were a fun part – we were able to give people a fair price and be able to change their lives a bit while still growing the company."

Rameson's latest adventure has been Austin's Park and Pizza in Texas. The project has offered challenges, but is "living up to all of our expectations quite well." Rameson credits the park's success to a good team of people. "We have a few people I've worked with in the past and that really makes a big difference. We have emphasized the group side of it and that works out well." When asked about future projects, Rameson says he will be ready to announce new park sites within weeks of the interview and promises further innovation within the FEC framework.



Austin's Park and Pizza

Without doubt, Bill Rameson's work during the last thirty years has helped determine the direction of today's Family Fun Center. His projects have ranged from major acquisitions to ground-up construction of family entertainment parks, and his experience makes him a visionary. "I was a little frustrated in acquisition mode because you have to buy other people's ideas and then try to change them," he admits. "When you can start from scratch, it's your own ideas. You either sink or swim and it's a little more gutsy that way." The Amusement industry anticipates further innovation from Rameson's camp. "I still think there's room for new ideas," he says, "and the whole secret is in the execution."



A flash from the sky, a burst of wind, or an unexpected lake inside your batting cages. Any or all of these events can produce severe and expensive, damage to your batting cage. Some of you know better than others how capable Mother Nature is at wreaking havoc. Preemptive planning is essential before any battle, and this Lady is a worthy foe. Here are some preventative measures you can take to protect your cage.

High Winds

While your facility isn't particularly vulnerable to moderate winds, high winds and certainly hurricane force winds can rip netting and bend pipe. Your best defense is to lower the canopy net all the way down and untie the ropes attached to the perimeter poles. Let the net lay on the cage floor until the danger passes. Sounds like a lot of work? Not really if you consider the alternative. Replacing or repairing bent center poles, perimeter pipes and netting is a lengthy and expensive job.

Water Damage

High winds and electrical power outages usually go hand in hand. No power, no sump pump. No sump pump and your cage can fill up in a hurry during heavy rains. Consider an alternative power source, like a portable generator (4000 to 5000 watts in most cases should be adequate), to power the sump pump. You could also use an engine-driven centrifugal pump. If none of these options are available, get on your hip waders. Remove the light boxes and get them above the perimeter level. You may be able to get them up high enough without disconnecting all the cords and cables by suspending them from the roof or setting them securely on top the baseball machines. Lifting the dual machines from their mounting pipes and moving them to higher ground would also be a good idea. Again, a lot of work, but a better alternative than extended down time for repairs or replacement.

Lightning Strikes

Lightning strikes are not only extremely dangerous to employees and patrons, they have the potential to cause severe damage to the electronic system in your cage. Since the pipes in the cage are surrounded by concrete, they are not truly grounded. This makes them very attractive to lightning strikes.

Unfortunately there is not a highly effective method to protect your equipment. If you are expecting a lightning storm, it may help to unplug all the equipment and electronics from the receptacles, and remove all the program cards from your processor. If you have the new PT-6 Electronics, in addition to unplugging the light boxes, disconnect the Control Computer from the data line. Consider disconnecting the low voltage cable wires inside the light box. By isolating the components from each other, the main electrical system and even from ungrounded, conductive mounting pipes, you will hopefully experience less damage. The best alternative is to seek out a company in your area that specializes in grounding systems and have one installed. Lightning is the number one cause of



Protection from the WEATHER

by Doug Spray

electronic component damage in batting cages. Any measures taken to reduce or eliminate this hazard will be well worth the expense.

I hope this helps. If you have any questions about these or other preventative actions you can take, please contact our Customer Service Department at 1-800-578-2243.

FunParts Xpress

Who are we?

Hello, and welcome to Fun Parts Xpress. My name is Jake Sheridan and I am the newest member of our winning team here at "FPX". We are a division of J&J Amusements, Inc. My goal is to help provide you the best possible customer service available. This has and will continue to be a top priority for us. Also, we take pride in offering the highest quality parts available on the market today. Our mission is simple, yet effective. How can we help you succeed? I'll tell you how; by saving you money on replacement parts. Let us be the ones to take the worry out of your repair problems. Our experienced staff members have considerable knowledge of the amusement industry. We are more than happy to help you through any problem that might arise. We offer convenient, effective ways to place your parts orders. Currently you can fax, phone, e-mail, or even order online if you would prefer. So don't be a stranger and give us a chance to help you today.



Jake Sheridan

What do we carry?

We offer a large selection of accessories and parts from Honda engines, Go-Kart tires, bumper boat tubes, K&N filters and supplies, pool chemicals, decals, brake components, miniature golf supplies, you name it and we probably carry it. Family Fun Centers, Mini golf, Go-Kart tracks, and Amusement parks are some of our many customers. If there is an item that you are looking for, odds are we have it or can get it. We manufacture quite a few of our own FPX brand parts also. What this does for us is allow us to keep our cost down so we can pass the savings on to you. That's why it is so important for you to give us a call.

What about shipping?

We ship our products all across the world. Most of our customers are in the continental United States, but we do ship internationally as well on a regular basis. UPS is our main means of transportation, but we are not limited to just using them. For example, if you order Go-Kart bodies, we will get quotes from several trucking companies to get you the absolute lowest price available. Our motto is: "Same Day Shipping.... Just Do It!"



Introducing the new **FPX Track Blaster**

New for 2004. Imagine cleaning and drying your go-kart track in the time it take to walk it. Now you can with the Track Blaster from FPX.

We offer the most powerful walk-behind blower on the market today. The hurricane force wind is created by a 16hp, V-Twin engine that is equipped with a huge 14 blade fan. The Track Blaster is capable of producing wind speeds of up to 180mph and over 2,400cfm which allows you to get the job done fast.

The Track Blaster is easy to start and operate. Its large 15 inch pneumatic rear tires make pushing it a breeze.

The Track Blaster is great for all your cleaning and drying needs. Use it on your track, parking lot, or your landscape. With a throttle control arm, you can adjust the wind speed to fit any of these cleaning tasks. Order yours today, and don't let the rain shut you down.



New tool for checking & maintaining kart speeds. (part# 1-60-0206)

The Vortex Pro 1200 Kart Speed Gauge is a clean, simple, rugged instrument for measuring and setting kart speed from a spinning rear wheel.

It accurately displays current speed, with the ability to store maximum and average speeds and other functions as well.

The Vortex can be used on either side of the kart, at speeds up to approximately 60 mph (100 kph).

The auto-on and power-save features ensure many months of use without changing batteries.



Some of the features of the Vortex Pro 1200 Kart Speed Gauge:

Simple

The display will automatically "wake up" and show current speed once the wheel is turning. No on/off buttons to worry about. Checking max, average and other stored items is simple and easy. There is almost nothing to learn!

Rugged

The Vortex is drop proof and intended for use in a rugged environment.

Accurate

The Vortex is accurate to within 0.5 mph (0.8 kph) from 2 to 60 mph (3 to 100 kph).

Inexpensive

The Vortex is priced for maximum value - quality hand-made parts and elegant design at a very attractive price.

Quality, Warranty & Support

180 day 100% warranty on anything that goes awry in the course of normal use. 100% refund if you return the unit within 2 weeks in as-new condition. The Vortex™ head is fully rebuildable. There are no expensive parts to wear & replace.

Pit Message on DVD!

Part# 1-60-0105

\$50.00

Get your message across via video-Don't rely on garbled audio to give this important safety information the emphasis it deserves.

What Is It?

A DVD Pre-Ride Briefing with video, graphics, text and audio. This high-energy, graphically enhanced DVD is designed to grab your customers' attention and outline track rules and regulations. This 3 minute and 45 second presentation can be set to repeat or play through on command.

It includes:

Visual demonstration of ride rules.

Audio briefing of the ride rules.

Text message of the ride rules.



Call us today for more information.

1-800-854-3140 or 503-304-8899 and ask for the parts department.

Complete Tire, Tube and Rim Special

Now is the time to start thinking about replacing all those old tires and rims on your Go-Karts. We have a tremendous deal for you right now. We are offering a complete Tire, Tube, and Rim Assembly for only \$16.00. That is a savings of over \$12.00 off the regular retail price of these individual items.

This is a four-lug, two-piece style rim that fits all J&J, Formula K, Pacer, and many other style karts. And best of all, they are completely assembled and ready to install on your karts. Hurry and take advantage of this great offer today. Stock up on the tires and rims that you will need for next year.

Give us a call to order your supply.

Have your seatbelts shown excessive wear? We have heard reports from the field in which bodies have rubbed against the seatbelts, causing premature wear. Call J&J's service department for more information or to obtain a free seatbelt retro-kit.

ABC WINTERIZATION TECHNIQUES

Year after year we run this article for the same reason: it's very important. Following the simple steps outlined below will save your equipment and help keep it functioning properly for another season.

DRAINAGE & CONVEYOR SYSTEM

- 1) Turn off power to the sub panel located in pit area.
- 2) If using an electric powered sump pump drainage system, be sure that the power leading to the sump pump is left "ON" at all times.
- 3) OPTIONAL: Remove fiberglass shroud then disconnect conveyor from hopper and place in area away from rain, snow, sleet etc...

NETTING SYSTEM

- 1) One method to protect your net and pipe structure is to untie the rope lanyard at every perimeter pole and let the net hang straight down from the net collar. This keeps any heavy snow load from tearing the net or bending the center pole and perimeter poles.
- 2) Another method that gives you a comfortable degree of safety and saves the job of pulling the net back up in the spring is as follows: At the top of each perimeter pole, tie a single piece of netting twine between the top horizontal rail and the metal net ring. Next un-tie the rope lanyard that typically holds the netting in place. This will hold the net in place, yet the single strand of twine would break loose under a heavy snow load. Upon opening in the spring you will need to re-tie the netting to the perimeter poles using heavier rope.

PITCHING MACHINE & LIGHT BOX

- 1) Place plastic bag over all pitching machines, then ventilate the bottom of each bag either by leaving bottom of bag open or placing a 3 inch long plastic tube that is at least has a 1 inch diameter hole. Tape the tube with the bag to the machine post.
- 2) Remove light boxes and place in a covered area away from direct weather. Cover up any bare wiring and place away from flooding levels.

COIN BOX & MICRO-PROCESSOR

- 1) Place plastic bag over all coin boxes, then ventilate the bottom of each bag either by leaving bottom of bag open or placing the 3 inch long plastic tube, then taping the tube with the bag to the machine post.
- 5) Unplug Master Control Panel power cord from outlet and remove all processor cards located in the middle of Master Control Panel, then place cards in a safe and dry place. Remember where they are stored.

Guys from the Great White North



Brian Legary, Leon Wilbanks (J&J) and Grant Pronishen

The current state-of-the-art remote shut down and control systems for concession go-karts are manufactured by Proleg Technologies. Brian Legary and Grant Pronishen visited J&J in October to preview their new Kartrol maintenance and operation video and spend some time with the crew at J&J. We all learned a lot from them as they updated us on new products that are in their future. We had time to give them the quick tour of the Oregon Coast in fall with the surf up pretty high. They declined the offer to hang ten, but did have crab at the Sea Hag in Depot Bay. A great time was had by all.

Brian and Grant both come from the amusement industry. In the 1980's Brian Legary (President) was operating a go kart track and Grant Pronishen (Vice President & Secretary/Treasurer) was running a waterpark nearby.

A need was identified for a product like KARTROL. By 1988 the prototype was developed and operating. By 1991 the product was proven, so PROLEG Technologies Inc. was formed to take it to the marketplace.

The company now has seven full time employees and varying part time employees. It is located near Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (Right in the center of Canada) which has an area population of approx. 800,000 and a very diverse economy.

The products are sold worldwide primarily through dealers. PROLEG Technologies Inc. builds products specifically targeted at the amusement industry such as go kart controls, timers, traffic light controllers, electronic voice messaging and announcement systems, bumper boat squirter controllers and bumper car controllers.

PROLEG products have also been used on snowmobiles, park trains, ATV's, watercraft and other hard rides.

PROLEG's primary focus is to serve the amusement industry with products specifically designed and packaged for it. Customer service goal is to have all standard products in stock at all times and shipped same day or next day. (custom orders 3 days) Repairs turned around same day or next day. Philosophy is to provide best possible service and warranty with due regard for the highly seasonal nature and fast pace of the amusement industry.

BIGFOOT & DUCKFOOT Tires by

Heavy duty wet and dry weather tires from the industry leader in concession go-karts.

Heavy duty tube, heaviest sidewall, and thickest tread designed for use on concrete, asphalt, or wood surface go-kart tracks.

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tube combo for
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Bigfoot tire/tube/in easy, mounted and
ready to go! #A007880

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