

# Michigan rink operator intends to help other operators get their game on with new book

By Suzy Weinland

For one Michigan rink owner, the hectic pace of running a roller skating rink just wasn't enough, so she decided to write a book.

Erika Wymer and her husband Jeff have owned Jumpin' Jupiter Skate Center in Muskegon, Mich., for 13 years and counting. About a year ago, Erika decided it would be a great idea for the roller skating industry to have a game resource book to use as a reference guide.

"Whether (operators) have a promotion in mind or are starting from scratch, I wanted a book that would help them with game

tion to the primary focus of roller skating, other activities include a redemption area and a softplay/bounce area called Bounce Quest. But, as she said, the goal is to keep patrons interested and involved so they stay at the rink and plan to return.

Wymer worked with industry consultant Bill Carlson, founder of U-Profit, to put together the right mix of information and fun. Bill said compiling this book was an important task that needed to be done to keep rink games and activities fresh and interesting.

"Roller skating is the core product in any rink. It's interactive and social and all about creating memorable experiences," he said. "We've got good music, a good skating floor, a nice facility and good service. But to get people interactive in a play atmosphere, that's an over-the-top experience."

The book, whose name is still in the works, will have sections that suggest games and activities for a wide range of ages and occasions, such as: best/most popular games; messy games; games for children, teens and adults; partner games; races and relays; 'side aisle' activities; contests and drawings; games for the birthday table, holidays and team building; and non-skating games.

Carlson indicated there also will be a special section detailing "game show" type games. "We did Jeopardy, Let's Make a Deal, Price is Right over the years, but then we got away from that. Now, there is a whole new bunch of stuff that is just incredibly fun and easy to do, and that will be in the book." He cited the current Minute-to-Win-It craze as an example.

The book will include a section with daily and monthly promotion ideas, said Wymer. "Say it's July, and an operator hasn't thought of what they want to do for that month. The book includes monthly as well as daily promotional ideas, such as Grandparent's Day or July's National Hot Dog

can use for prize giveaways.

This games book will also include a listing of supplies needed for various games mentioned in the book, and where to find them at the best prices. Carlson shared that he has researched game props and accessories for his own seminars, and the supply list will include only the safest and highest quality items. "For example, gator skin balls are soft enough that if someone gets hit in the head up close, it is not going to hurt them," Carlson said. "They are made of a soft, sponge-like material, but have a covering that allows them to last a long time."

"We want rinks to be able to continue to create memorable experiences by making a big deal about the winner, having the DJ announce their name so everyone recognizes them, changing up the games to help the 'losers' win and prohibit the 'all-the-time' winners from always winning," explained Carlson. "We want guests to anticipate coming to the rink and when they leave we want them to talk about it at school on Monday morning."

According to Wymer, while this new book will contain variations of some previously published rink games, there are no repeats. The targeted release date is May 2011, just before the RSA Convention and Trade Show in Orlando, Fla.

If you have game ideas or tips to share for the book, call Erika Wymer at 231-773-5538 or e-mail her at wymerj1@msn.com.



Pass the pretzel, please!

ideas," Wymer said.

She also wanted the book to be something that when used by rink operators will help keep guests in the building longer. "We tend to get complacent with our entertainment, and the session tends to get a little boring to the customers when we aren't prepared to excite, entertain and amuse them," added Wymer.

The Wymers have a 24,000 sq. ft. rink to fill with activities every weekday evening and all day on Saturday and Sunday. In addition



Skaters always love the popular scooter relay.

Month."

All of the games referred to in the book will have detailed explanations and "how-tos" as well as suggested prizes. Flip to the back of the book and the reader will find several pages of customizable prize cards that roller skating centers can add their name to and either print off at the rink or have their local printer print for them. They can be used for a variety of in-rink prizes, such as a free drink, cotton candy, a whole pizza, etc.

Carlson added that the prize cards are re-usable and will also include a prize value on them, showing the winner the value of what they have won. Additionally, there will be a section of trivia questions from the Roller Skating Association and the National Museum of Roller Skating, which operators

## Floor game tips...

Here are some helpful suggestions for getting skaters to smoothly and safely transition from one floor game to the next, from Ken Merideth of Greenwood Skate Center in Bowling Green, Ky.:

First, use a game to stop the session skating (e.g., Hokey Pokey). Have your skaters go in the opposite direction, then backward only in the opposite direction (this uses right foot over left foot, the same as forward skating in the original direction, and makes it easier for beginning backward skaters).

Then begin another game (chicken dance, cha cha slide, etc.). Afterward, return to original direction.

This does away with the lag time in having skaters stop, turn around, and go in the opposite direction, and keeps a smoother and safer flow of traffic on the floor.

If you do not use games or activities to change the direction of travel on the floor, your faster skaters will turn and proceed before the slower skaters can. This creates an undue hazard and danger to your skaters.



**Roller Racer®**



**Roller Skate Wheel Washer®**



**MASON CORPORATION**

**"Serving the rink industry since 1982!"**

**800-821-4141**

8114 Isabella Lane  
Brentwood, TN 37027  
www.masoncorporation.com  
info@masoncorporation.com



**Roller Racer® Caddy**



**Soft Playgrounds**