

Rob Ocampo

Subject: FW: July 19, 2006 Venues Today



VENUES**today**

The news behind the headlines

Dear Rob,

July 19, 2006 VOL. V, Number XXIII ISSN 1547-4143

Welcome to your **Venues Today** weekly e-newsletter, full of the latest live entertainment industry news. Look for VT's IAAM/NAC Convention Preview in our upcoming August magazine. And for the first time, we're adding a blog to our menu of publications. We will be blogging at the IAAM/NAC convention in San Antonio. For a full calendar listing, to view archives or to subscribe to *Venues Today*, visit our Web site at www.venuestoday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We're going to help to extend your brand, not merchandise your band." — *Brad Beckerman, new merchandise guru at Live Nation, on his vision for branding touring artists at venues through authentic lifestyle T-shirts and upscale displays*

IN THIS ISSUE...

- **Playing Field Leveled and Legalized for Ticket Resales in Florida**
 - **Faces & Places: Gessner and Eskowitz Promoted Again; Beckerman Brings Brand Savvy to Live Nation**
 - **Hot Tickets: Wrestling and Mixed Martial Arts Dominate 10K-15K Category**
 - **Baseball Park Road Show Strong But Scaled Back for Third Trek**
 - **Air Guitar Tour Planned for U.S. Club Circuit**
 - **Aramark Chefs As Well As Vendors Showcased at All-Star Game**
 - **Toledo Has Double the Fun as Baseball and Golf Coincide**
 - **Short Takes**
 - **Help Wanted**
-

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!

Visit our booth (#736) in San Antonio at the 81st
be celebrating **four wonderful years** of covering
participate in our **first trade show blog!**

VENUE NEWS





The new Florida ticketing law which allows resale of tickets was a topic at the Florida Facility Managers Association meeting. Attending that June 18-20 gathering at the Four Seasons in Palm Beach, Fla., were, at left, Cherie Worley, FFMA executive director; Kenneth Feld, Feld Entertainment, keynoter, and Lionel Dubay, FFMA president and director of the O'Connell Center, Gainesville, Fla. At right are Dr. Susan Foster, Saint Leo University/Dept. of Sport Management, conferring with Lynda Reinhart, assistant director of the O'Connell Center, who presented a session on recruiting and benefiting from the use of interns at venues.

PLAYING FIELD LEVELED AND LEGALIZED FOR TICKET RESALES IN FLORIDA

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

That's what ticketing companies in Florida are doing after years of fruitlessly fighting ticket scalping. As of July 1, a new state bill went into effect legalizing the resale of tickets without limiting the amount.

After decades of unsuccessfully battling scalpers and seeing little enforcement of resell laws, which used to limit Florida's secondary market to \$1 over face value, Ticketmaster Senior Vice President of Policy Kerry Samovar said his company's best solution to curbing scalping is to economically compete against ticket brokers and resell agents.

"Quite frankly, the best way to fight this unauthorized activity is for the venues to engage in this activity themselves," he said.

Florida is now the 35th state to legalize scalping, and Samovar said his company is lobbying for similar legislation in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Last year, South Carolina and Louisiana and the city of Cleveland passed similar laws, essentially legalizing scalping.

For nearly six decades, it had been illegal in Florida to resell a ticket for more than \$1 over the face value, unless authorized to do so by the venue. The law was intended to curb street scalpers, but many ticket brokers got around the law by manipulating a loophole that allowed for higher resell if the tickets were packaged with travel or hotel accommodations.

Many ticket brokers offered their clients phony transportation along with inflated tickets, knowing that most concert-goers would use their own methods of transportation to attend events. The proliferation of Internet resale web sites and online marketplaces like eBay only exacerbated the problem, Samovar said.

"We knew of next to no enforcement," he said. "It was a situation where an illegal marketplace was existing, and like most illegal marketplaces, two problems were occurring. First there were many instances of fraud, and fake tickets. Secondly, people were paying artificially inflated prices for tickets," he said.

In essence, the law only stopped Ticketmaster from reselling tickets, while an underground scalping economy flourished. With the new law, Ticketmaster said it now plans to launch its own secondary ticket business in Florida, based on models it uses in other states where scalping is legal.

"Our position has always been that competition is the greatest way to apply pressure to these folks," he said. "The people who have the most to lose through the legalization of ticket scalping are the scalpers themselves."

Ticketmaster's Ticketexchange program allows sports season-ticket holders to resell single-day tickets on the company's website at a price set by the ticket holder. Once the sale is complete, Ticketmaster splits a portion of the sale with the hosting venue and returns the rest of the money to the season-ticket holder. Ticketmaster then issues a new ticket to the purchaser and cancels the season-holder's ticket for that game. Customers who use the Ticketmaster site have a guarantee that they won't be sold fraudulent tickets, he said.

"On a hot event, you don't have a lot of people banging on the will call window with bogus tickets in their hand," Samovar said.

The new law makes it illegal for scalpers to buy tickets in excess of set ticket limits, but doesn't set a limit on how many tickets a broker is allowed to sell. Ticketmaster had originally lobbied to get a clause banning scalping without the consent of the team, promoter or venue, but lawmakers left a loophole in the bill, allowing third-party web sites to resell tickets without permission if the site gave a moneyback guarantee on cancelled events. The law also makes it illegal to sell tickets on venue property without the permission of the venue.

Florida venue managers were split on the bill, pro and con, and most are still in a wait-and-see mode as to the direct effect it will have on their businesses.

Lionel Dubay, director of the O'Connell Center, Gainesville, Fla., and president of the Florida Facility Managers Association (FFMA), said the FFMA board took a position against the ticket resale law.

When it was against the law to re-sell a ticket for more than \$1 over face value, there was less temptation to jump into the resale business, Dubay added. "The [board's] thought was this law would encourage more people to get into the business of scalping tickets. Then you have more of the good seats you want to make available to the public eaten up by the ticket scalpers."

Protecting the public is usually the paramount concern for the venue manager, who is the front line welcoming the public to the facility. Mike LaPan, executive director of the Lakeland (Fla.) Civic Center, liked the idea that the consumer who could not attend a show for a legitimate reason would be able to legally pass his tickets on, and even that the consumer who buys a ticket on-line for an inflated price might get all that money

back if a show is cancelled. But the dynamics of how it works are to be determined, he said.

"Who do you see standing on the corner [scalping tickets]? Joe and Sally who got stuck with an extra ticket when their mother-in-law cancelled. The professionals in Florida got around [scalping laws] for years by setting up a travel agency. From that perspective, it was the local consumer who was standing on the street corner anyway," LaPan noted.

Season ticket resales are key to the widespread support for this bill among professional sports teams, added Allen Johnson, executive director of the T.D. Waterhouse Center, Orlando, home of the Orlando Magic of the National Basketball Association. Johnson believed the bill would mostly affect the Magic season ticket holder who can't attend all the games he has paid for. Now he can resell the ticket through various avenues. And at the arena, Johnson can be more aggressive about stopping the resale on the street corner, where the buyer is most at risk. The legitimate reseller can unload his ticket other ways and the consumer is protected when it's done through electronic means. "It puts the burden on the electronic vendor to be sure the tickets are legitimate," Johnson said.

Johnson has been "cognizant of what's going on in our industry for years. Now the consumer will have the opportunity to go to a site and be assured that at least they may get a ticket that is not counterfeit or a print-at-home forgery."

In the habit of pulling up shows on line to find out what the market was going to be for an upcoming event, Johnson noted, "Some were listed before we went on sale, which drove me crazy. It was going on. Now we have a chance maybe to control it a little bit better.

"We're all worried about consumers, but it's a whole different day now. The industry has changed so much about where people get tickets. We have to make it safer for the consumer and make it possible to share in some of it if we can," Johnson said.

One of the most interesting early tests of the new bill will be at O'Connell Center, where Tom Petty returns to his hometown venue after a 13-year absence. The show, promoted by Fantasma Productions, goes on sale July 21. The early plans are to limit ticket purchases per customer.

Petty had a major problem with fan club tickets that were being scalped on the Internet to several of his earlier shows, forcing a recall of tickets and instituting a will call window to pick up the remarketed ducats (*Venues Today*, July 2006 issue). How he'll approach the new situation in Florida was still a question mark. "Everything is in alignment for the perfect storm," said Darius Dunn, associate director at O'Connell Center.

LaPan said "the interesting part of the Florida law is that it's an attempt to control tickets sold through electronic means and that's new."

Limiting the number of seats per purchase isn't foolproof, of course. If more people want to get into the resale business now that it's legal, they will find a way, Dubay suggested. "If you see a chance to make some money, you're going to gather together 10 of your friends and if you get some choice seats and put it on sale, putting it up on the Internet for just a little time, you can make some pretty good money.

"On a personal note, I'm against the law. I felt it would drive the price of the tickets up for the general public and take some of the good tickets out of the hands of the fans that don't have the bucks in their pocket to afford these tickets. I'm all for capitalism,

but I just think you have to make as much of a fair playing field as you possibly can.”

Though FFMA expressed its disagreement with the bill, the association didn't campaign aggressively against it, Dubai said. “Our sunset tax exemption bill was up for consideration this year. That was FFMA's priority,” and they did win the tax exemption for three more years. — Linda Deckard and Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this story: Kerry Samovar, (619) 298-9411; Mike LaPan, (863) 834-8133; Lionel Dubai, Allen Johnson, (407) 849-2012; Darius Dunn, (352) 392-5500



Brad Gessner. Brad Beckerman, Bruce Eskowitz

FACES & PLACES: GESSNER AND ESKOWITZ PROMOTED AGAIN; BECKERMAN BRINGS BRAND SAVVY TO LIVE NATION

In what is now his second promotion and third job in five months, **Brad Gessner** has been named interim general manager of the **San Diego Convention Center Corporation**. He replaces **Rudolph A. Johnson III** who left to assume the position of CEO and president of Neighborhood House Association of San Diego.

Gessner returned to the San Diego Convention Center Feb. 13 (VT e-newsletter Feb. 8, 2006), starting as convention and event services director, a position he held in the late '80s when he first begged his way on board, and then becoming assistant general manager. “Rudy got a great job; he's a great guy to work for,” Gessner said. Gessner originally left San Diego in 1996. “Sometimes you have to move around to move up,” he said.

Returning to San Diego and now with a shot at becoming the fulltime general manager, with a selection process to be announced, “it's a dream come true for me,” said Gessner. “My goal is to some day be general manager of this facility. I really am kind of giddy over the whole thing.”

Brad Beckerman is thrilled with his opportunity to leap into the venue merchandise business after three years of building **Trunk Ltd.** as a high-end, authentic lifestyle consumer brand. He has sold a majority interest in his young company to **Live Nation** and will now serve as president and chief creative officer of Merchandising at Live Nation, at the same time he helms Trunk Ltd., which has more than 60 exclusive licenses with musical artists, including AC/DC, Aerosmith, The Beatles, Blondie, Jimi Hendrix, Pink Floyd, The Grateful Dead, The Doors, The Rolling Stones, Motley Crue and David Bowie.

The acquisition represents the entrance of Live Nation into the artist-merchandising arena and is one of many Live Nation initiatives under the auspices of **Bruce Eskowitz** who was just added chief executive officer to his president title, in charge of Global Venues and Alliances at Live Nation. The Alliances division was formerly known as

Sponsorship at the company.

Eskowitz will continue to oversee the 153 venues the company currently owns, operates and/or books around the world and to direct Live Nation's Alliances division which markets the company's network of assets. "We have a really clear focus that we're growing a venue business," Eskowitz told *Venues Today*. "We now have our buildings under central management. We're trying to make it the best fan experience we can at our venues. We're trying to put a greater emphasis on the fan and that's been a great change for us."

"You'll continue to see this strategically significant market grow," he said, including new construction, acquisition, management deals or whatever makes sense.

Meanwhile, Beckerman is focusing on the fan experience as well.

"We will reinvigorate the venue by changing how it's merchandised, how it's displayed, both the selling experience and the buying experience. It's been done the same way for 30 years. They set up a table with a grid behind it and they hang up or pin up merchandise with numbers and prices. People wait in line six to 10 people deep and point and say, 'I want that, what size does it come in?'" Instead, he sees the possibility of a store directly outside the building, of amphitheater stores in Live Nation venues, of a display that offers shipping services, and a product that includes a luxury line, labeled and numbered Trunk Ltd. and a choice of a Trunk edition that is not limited.

Live Nation will view merchandising from a branding perspective, he said. "We are going to work with Live Nation, clearly the best, strongest and biggest at what they do, and complement it to present the bands in a consistency from promotion to online opportunity to buying the tickets. The whole thing has to tie together," Beckerman said.

Trunk Ltd. now has an existing credibility with the artists and the consumers. "We are going to bring a consistency of authenticity to the concert industry," he said, likening it to what was done in sports when he worked for Starter.

Beckerman doesn't see anyone shut out or getting less. "I believe that high tides float all boats. I think there is an opportunity for everyone in this industry. What it comes down to is how do we create a strategic vision and plan and do it in such a way where we can link the best of the best. If there are existing merchandisers with existing relationships with brands, artists, managers, that's wonderful. How do we complement it, take it to the next level. I'm very willing to work with other people."

When talking to artists, Beckerman points out that they have a video director and an album producer. What they often lack is a brand manager, handling that image that lives on after the product cycles off the shelf. "We're going to help to extend your brand, not merchandise your band," he tells them.

Being a "brand champion" very much involves the venues, which Beckerman lauds as "the most powerful place in the world. The venue is where there is a cultivation of the avid fan that is emotionally connected to something, part of something." In fact, he's also excited about branding the venues. "Live Nation owns the Apollo Theater. That's a brand. Or the Fillmore. That's a brand. I'm a kid in a candy store. And now House of Blues. This is terrific. I couldn't be happier."

It had always been his plan to enter the concert merchandise business, having cut his teeth in the sports business. "We built with Starter this global brand of leveraging North American sports. But when you leave the U.S. and say football, everyone thinks soccer.

But when you leave the U.S. and say Madonna, U2, Beatles, these are global brands. So I've had a vision if I could deliver a high level, quality product with the brand, image and essence of these internationally recognized brands and I could bring it to a captive audience, game over."

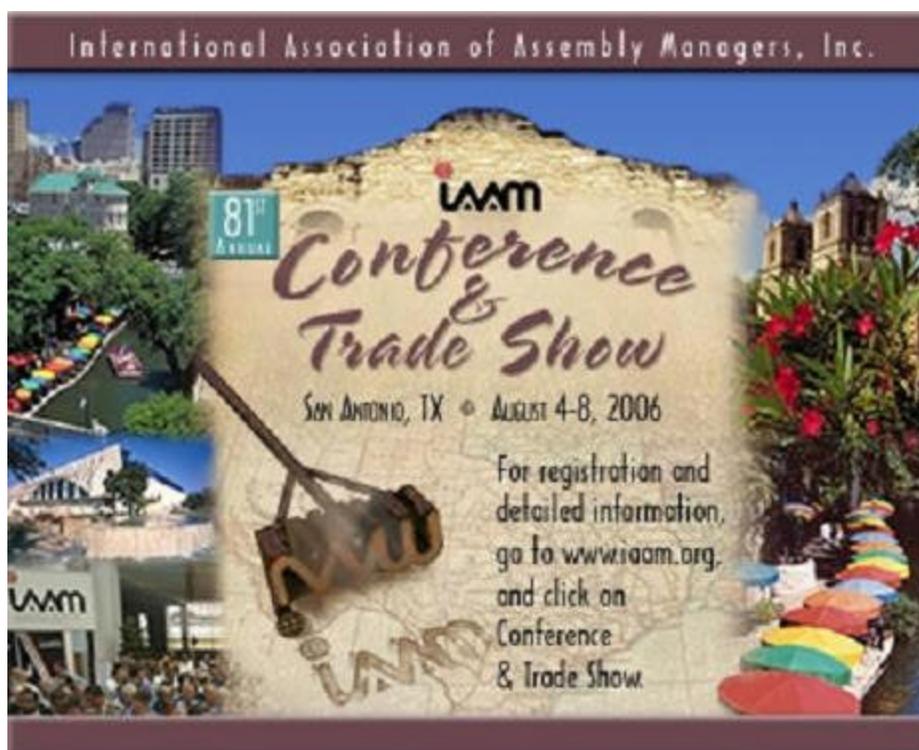
With Trunk Ltd., "we have created the single, authentic brand in music lifestyle products," Beckerman said. "There isn't another authentic brand in the business. Others have licenses, but they are all generic. Because of our insignia side seam and our brand and placement at traditional retail, it has made consumers and artists alike buy the brand. So when I come to venues, I'm not just coming with another rock and roll product. I'm coming with a branded rock and roll product. We put our Trunk elephant with the Rolling Stones, with AC/DC, with Aerosmith. That combination gives us the authenticity to say we're the real deal. We're the artist's choice. We're the original, we're the originators. That's the shift. Anyone else who tries to follow the model is only following. Now, having the relationship with Live Nation, gives us the opportunity to exploit that position."

Beckerman sees no roadblocks. Pricing is not a problem because "we're vertical. We manufacture all of our products. We're already making stuff so economies of scale are better." And he will have the high end and low end labels.

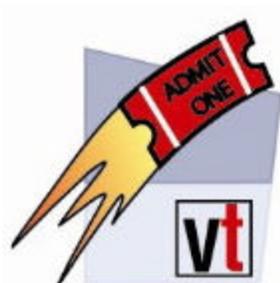
He did not reveal the purchase price, but he said Trunk Ltd. did \$12 million in retail sales this year, compared to \$3 million its first year in business. Right now, the company has 24 employees. He sees Live Nation as another fast track company and was impressed with Michael Rapino, CEO of Live Nation, and the corporate culture. "When I met Michael, I literally had a deal on the table with a major company in the fashion business. Michael and I, our visions were so in line. This guy gets it. We met through mutual friends in the business. He thought I was going to show him cool product, and I showed him a vision."

Portability is the key word now. Beckerman predicts the table and grid will be a merchandise relic at venues in the future. "I think the people who are actually the sellers have to be more connected to the product and the artist," Beckerman said. — Linda Deckard

Interviewed for this story: Brad Gessner, (619) 525-5429; Brad Beckerman, (310) 845-7700; Bruce Eskowitz, (310) 867-7021



BOOKINGS



HOT tickets

WRESTLING AND MIXED MARTIAL ARTS DOMINATE 10K-15K CATEGORY

HOT TICKETS is a weekly summary of the top acts and ticket sales as reported to **Venues Today** e-newsletter. Following are the top

20 concerts and events, the top 5 in each seating capacity category, which took place since June 27, 2006. To submit reports, e-mail HotTickets@venuestoday.com or fax to (714)

378-0040.

The **Hot Tickets** this week as reported to **Venues Today**:

15,001 or More Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$4,136,945; *Event:* Kenny Chesney, Big & Rich, Carrie Underwood, Dierks Bentley, Gretchen Wilson; *Venue:* **Gillette Stadium, Foxboro, Mass.**; *Attendance:* 55,124; *Ticket Range:* \$85.50-\$37.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, The Messina Group; *Dates:* July 16; *No. of Shows:* 1

2) *Gross Sales:* \$2,444,720; *Event:* Tim McGraw & Faith Hill; *Venue:* **Verizon Center, Washington**; *Attendance:* 29,826; *Ticket Range:* \$88-\$38; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* June 29-30; *No. of Shows:* 2

3) *Gross Sales:* \$2,224,230; *Event:* Pearl Jam, Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers; *Venue:* **Xcel Energy Center, Saint Paul, Minn.**; *Attendance:* 28,168; *Ticket Range:* \$87.75-

\$47.75; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* June 26–27; *No. of Shows:* 2

4) *Gross Sales:* \$1,389,914; *Event:* Cirque du Soleil's Delirium; *Venue:* **Mellon Arena, Pittsburgh**; *Attendance:* 16,542; *Ticket Range:* \$110.50-\$69; *Promoter:* Live Nation, Cirque du Soleil; *Dates:* June 29-July 1; *No. of Shows:* 3

5) *Gross Sales:* \$1,247,771; *Event:* Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; *Venue:* **Tweeter At the Waterfront, Camden, N.J.**; *Attendance:* 16,711; *Ticket Range:* \$201-\$38; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 6; *No. of Shows:* 1

10,001-15,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$781,772; *Event:* Cirque du Soleil's Delirium; *Venue:* **Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall**; *Attendance:* 9,644; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$69.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation, Cirque du Soleil; *Dates:* July 7-8; *No. of Shows:* 2

2) *Gross Sales:* \$211,535; *Event:* WWE Raw Live!; *Venue:* **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; *Attendance:* 5,949; *Ticket Range:* \$62.23-\$17.78; *Promoter:* WWE; *Dates:* July 8; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$123,380; *Event:* Caged Fury; *Venue:* **Atlantic City (N.J.) Boardwalk Hall**; *Attendance:* 2,146; *Ticket Range:* \$250-\$47.50; *Promoter:* Amflex LLC; *Dates:* June 30; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$98,562; *Event:* Total Combat MMA Xtreme Cage Fighting; *Venue:* **ipayOne Center at the Sports Arena, San Diego**; *Attendance:* 2,317; *Ticket Range:* \$153-\$28; *Promoter:* Total Combat Entertainment; *Dates:* July 15; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$76,485; *Event:* Dashboard Confessional; *Venue:* **John Labatt Centre, London, Ontario**; *Attendance:* 2,611; *Ticket Range:* \$31.90; *Promoter:* House of Blues Canada; *Dates:* July 1; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,001-10,000 Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$761,817; *Event:* The String Cheese Incident; *Venue:* **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; *Attendance:* 17,302; *Ticket Range:* \$47.50-\$42; *Promoter:* Kroenke Sports Enterprises, Live Nation; *Dates:* July 1-2; *No. of Shows:* 2

2) *Gross Sales:* \$545,858; *Event:* Counting Crows, Goo Goo Dolls; *Venue:* **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; *Attendance:* 9,484; *Ticket Range:* \$69.50-\$49.50; *Promoter:* Kroenke Sports Enterprises, Live Nation; *Dates:* July 5; *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$400,490; *Event:* Steely Dan & Michael McDonald; *Venue:* **Nokia at Grand Prairie (Texas)**; *Attendance:* 4,380; *Ticket Range:* \$125-\$55; *Promoter:* AEG Live; *Dates:* July 12; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$358,145; *Event:* Nickelback, Hinder, Hoobastank, Three Days Grace; *Venue:* **Cumberland County Civic Center, Portland, Maine**; *Attendance:* 7,725; *Ticket Range:* \$47.50; *Promoter:* AEG Live, Concerts West, Fastlane Concerts, The Messina Group; *Dates:* July 11; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$231,988; *Event:* Blues Traveler; *Venue:* **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver**; *Attendance:* 6,429; *Ticket Range:* \$40-\$37.50; *Promoter:* Kroenke Sports Enterprises, Live Nation; *Dates:* July 4; *No. of Shows:* 1

5,000 or Fewer Seats

1) *Gross Sales:* \$571,678; *Event:* Chicago; *Venue:* **Tampa Bay (Fla.) Performing Arts Center**; *Attendance:* 10,266; *Ticket Range:* \$66.50-\$20; *Promoter:* Live Nation, In-house; *Dates:* June 27-July 2; *No. of shows:* 8

2) *Gross Sales:* \$237,870; *Event:* Melissa Etheridge; *Venue:* **Long Beach (Calif.) Terrace Theater**; *Attendance:* 2,905 *Ticket Range:* \$100-\$35; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* June 30 *No. of Shows:* 1

3) *Gross Sales:* \$213,683; *Event:* Gipsy Kings; *Venue:* **Chicago Theatre**; *Attendance:* 2,649; *Ticket Range:* \$92.50-\$47.50; *Promoter:* Jam Productions; *Dates:* July 13; *No. of Shows:* 1

4) *Gross Sales:* \$206,022; *Event:* Bonnie Raitt; *Venue:* **Bank of America Pavilion, Boston**; *Attendance:* 5,076; *Ticket Range:* \$50-\$28.50; *Promoter:* Live Nation; *Dates:* July 2; *No. of Shows:* 1

5) *Gross Sales:* \$204,049; *Event:* Bachman Cummings; *Venue:* **Hamilton (Ontario) Place Theatre**; *Attendance:* 3,993; *Ticket Range:* \$62.44-\$53.45; *Promoter:* House of Blues Canada; *Dates:* June 29-30; *No. of Shows:* 2

Compiled by Rob Ocampo, HotTickets@venuestoday.com



Bob Dylan; a packed ballpark during the original 2004 tour

BASEBALL PARK ROAD SHOW STRONG BUT SCALED BACK FOR THIRD TREK

The road goes on for Bob Dylan. As the veteran rocker is preparing to launch his third summer tour of minor league ballparks on Aug. 12 at Fifth Third Ballpark, Comstock Park, Mich., tour promoter Jerry Mickelson, Jam Productions, said the concept of ballpark shows is proving to be a solid triple, if not quite a home run.

"What we're finding is that it is affordable for people to attend, especially those turned off by the amphitheater experience," said Mickelson, who has promoted all three Dylan minor league tours. "Beers at these ballparks are not \$9-\$10 like they are at amphitheaters and kids under 12 get in free. There's typically no facility fees and no parking charges. It's a much more rich and fulfilling experience for people who want to see music."

After hitting 22 parks in 2004 and 30 last year, the schedule is scaled back a bit to 17 dates for 2006, a factor that had more to do with not wanting to repeat some of the same small markets than of ticket demand. Mickelson would not discuss ticket sales for this summer's dates, but said they remain solid. "People are interested," he said. "But it boils down to affordability and money. Artists today are having a hard time filling seats. If you want to be reasonable with guarantees and give a reasonable ticket price to the consumer, we can do these kinds of shows."

From the financial side, Mickelson said it's important to have reasonable expectations and while they don't always meet those expectations with the Dylan dates, "we are trying to build the business to the point where we do. I wouldn't do it if it wasn't profitable."

The franchise expanded last summer with a Bryan Adams/Def Leppard tour that did solid business, but so far this year Dylan is the only artist working the minor league parks. Others have been approached, but without signed deals, Mickelson was reluctant to talk about any other prospects. "We're always working on them, for this year and next year," he said.

One person who is excited about the Dylan tour is Tom Whaley, executive vice president, Goldklang Group, owner or operator of seven minor league ball clubs. This summer, the Dylan show rolls into the Group's Dutchess Stadium in Wappingers Falls, N.Y., on Sept. 1 and Whaley said there's "no question" the minor league baseball park concert tours experiment has been a success so far.

"There's a lot more talk about it," Whaley said. "It's certainly a known commodity in the music touring business now. But a lot of bands are so used to playing it down the middle in terms of playing big sheds or small amphitheaters, when you tell them they'll be playing a minor league park they still have some questions."

Whaley said he's sensed that Dylan loves playing the parks, but admits that that might be because you have to have a "bit of minstrel" in you to do it, mostly because the towns the tour hits — such as Augusta, Ga.; Frederick, Md., and Pittsfield, Mass. — are outside the major markets loop.

Whaley also wouldn't talk financial specifics on the tour, but, like Mickelson, said it probably wouldn't be back for a third year if it weren't successful. For the Goldklang Group's parks, the tour is a boon because they roll in on nights when the stadium is dark and generate parking, food and beverage money that is above the ballgame revenue.

He said each team/stadium has a different deal, but the show are rentals that typically cost between \$5,000 and \$15,000, paid by the promoter, who sometimes also sees a 5% or higher cut of food and beverage sales as well. The rental fee can be flat or based on a per ticket count. As in summer's past, many of the teams are supplying jerseys and other signed memorabilia for fans to give the shows that extra baseball touch.

Mickelson said the formula he's developed with Dylan is so good he doesn't see any reason to tinker with it for now, which means not a lot of new promotions or tweaks to the format for this summer. "It's such a fulfilling, rich experience, you have to attend it to understand how great it is," he said. "These ballparks know how to cater to their customers." Tickets for the show are \$49.50.

Mickelson declined to comment on whether the Dylan tour — which has played to 500,000 fans so far while rarely going West of the Mississippi — will be back next

summer. This summer's dates will feature support from guitar slinger Jimmie Vaughan, roadhouse singer Lou Ann Barton, guit-steel star Junior Brown and opener and former Hot Club of Cowtown singer Elana James with her new band, The Continental Two. — Gil Kaufman

Interviewed for this story: Jerry Mickelson (312) 266-6262; Tom Whaley, (651) 644-3517

2006 NYC Regional Air Guitar Champion Andrew "William Ocean" Litz.



AIR GUITAR TOUR PLANNED FOR U.S. CLUB CIRCUIT

To err is human, but to air guitar is art — and potentially a new way to fill small clubs and venues.

Once a silly way for rock fans to strum along with their favorite bands, air guitar could soon become a big business in the U.S. now that talent agent William Morris is looking to tour the fledgling U.S. Air Guitar series into 500 to 1,000-seat clubs

throughout the U.S.

Morris music agent Seth Seigle said he was finalizing plans to book the U.S. Air Guitar series on a 20-city tour in early 2007, following a swath of recent publicity including an independent film that screened at the Tribeca film festival and heavy mainstream media coverage from radio and television. The first performance will be in March at the South by Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas, publicist Matt Hayes said. It's unclear whether the tour will launch from Texas, or just do a one-off performance and begin on either coast. Hayes said he plans to begin booking the show this fall.

"We're promoting and booking this just like we would a normal rock or metal band," said Hayes, who added the obscure nature of the competition, mixed in with rock and roll, might be enough to fill clubs.

"Our goal is to say 'You love this, you know what you're doing, and now it's happening outside of your bedroom or your fraternity house'," Seigle said.

Air guitar enthusiasts Kriston Rucker and Cedric DeVitt created U.S. Air Guitar four years ago, holding competitions in Los Angeles and New York to select a national air guitar champion and send them to the Air Guitar World Championships in Oulu, Finland.

The U.S. competition grew over time, and in 2005, it included sponsorship from VH1 and Schick, and regional competitions in Asheville, N.C.; Austin, Texas; Boston; Chicago; Columbus, Ohio; Los Angeles; Miami; Minneapolis; Phoenix; New York; San Francisco; and Tulsa, Okla. Seigle said Air Guitar has now grown enough of a following to be taken to the next level of touring.

"It's time to take it out of John's Pizza House and bring it to the House of Blues," he said. "I want to book it properly, but it's also important to keep that authentic feel. It's like trying to take karaoke out of a karaoke bar and watch it grow."

Seigle said he hasn't worked out a format for the Air Guitar series, although he envisioned pre-selected contestants from each city battling it out in an American Idol style competition, emceed by former U.S. Champ Dan "Bjorn Toroque" Crane. He even envisions opening and closing the competitions with performances from an actual live metal band, although he hasn't said if he'll tour acts, or simply rely on local talent.

Beyond the touring, Seigle said he hopes to spin off air guitar into a number of successful products including DVDs and photography books, available at trendy retailers like Urban Outfitters and college bookstores. Air Guitar has been featured on a number of news programs and television shows in recent months. Radio Personality Howard Stern had dedicated hours of coverage to Air Guitar on his former syndicated terrestrial-radio program, and the phenomena has also been featured on shows hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, Conan O'Brien and Carson Daly.

"It's branding and we're hoping to capitalize on all these things intelligently," he said. "We have to find the right time, the right audience and the right location."

The tour will launch as co-producers Dan Culforth and Jane Lipsitz seek distribution for their film "Air Guitar Nation," a movie by director Alexandra Lipsitz which premiered at last year's South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin. Culforth and Lipsitz are the executive producers behind television shows "Project Runway" and "Last Comic Standing."

Hayes estimated that tickets will run between \$10 and \$12 in new markets, and a little more in cities where Air Guitar has previously toured.

"Logistically, it's a piece of cake for venues to host," Hayes said. "All they need is an outlet to plug in a laptop and they're set. It's a venue's dream because there are no costs and they can make a killing." — Dave Brooks

Interviewed for this article: Seth Seigle, (212) 586-5100; Matt Hayes, (718) 599-3750

CONCESSIONS



Aramark Action Stations on the concourse level at PNC Park feature ballpark favorites like Philadelphia cheesesteaks. At right, Rob Yore, 15 year veteran vendor from Oriole Park works the crowd.

ARAMARK CHEFS AS WELL AS VENDORS SHOWCASED AT ALL-STAR GAME

As per what has become tradition, Aramark brought in an all-star vendor team for Major League Baseball's All-Star Game July 11 at PNC Park, Pittsburgh. But this year, they went the extra step of also importing a few all-star executive chefs with their best signature dishes. The initiative helps market the Aramark brand to fans and clients while improving the experience and quality provided to the patrons at the venues.

"We brought in four of our chefs to create what are typically found at premium service or club levels," said Steve Musciano, Aramark general manager for Aramark at PNC Park. All chefs were from other ballparks that are Aramark accounts.

Michael Miele, who has had 31 years of experience as an executive chef at Citizens Bank Park, Philadelphia, for example, offered his Philadelphia Cheese steaks.

"We even brought in the meat from Philadelphia," Musciano said.

Todd Komori, a 25-year veteran chef from Angel Stadium, Anaheim, Calif., prepared a Sope dish. It was a corn shell with beef tenderloin, sour cream, salsa and other ingredients. The Sope sold for \$10.75.

Chef Sean Toland brought signature lobster salad and seafood chowder from Boston's Fenway Park. And crab cakes were offered by chef Robert Yore from Oriole Park, Baltimore. A total of 1200 crab cakes were sold at \$13.75 each.

"Prices were very reasonable. Sandwiches ranged from \$10.95 to \$13.95," Musciano said.

Other special food for the occasion included half-pound Black Angus cheeseburgers with grilled onions and a National League Chicken Sandwich, which was a six-ounce split chicken breast served with an artichoke and olive dressing.

"We even showcased our specialty relish," said Musciano, of a relish made with white balsamic vinaigrette, onions and sugar.

Along with the new offerings, Aramark also provided the usual assortment of fan favorites such as hot dogs and Cracker Jacks. Sales of hot dogs approached 19,000, with the crowd also eating 5,000 bags of peanuts and drinking 6,000 gallons of soda and 32,000 gallons of water.

Other food sales results: 3,500 Quaker Steak & Lube Wings, 1,600 Polish Kielbasas, 16,000 trays of Nachos, 12,000 pounds of Pretzels, 7,000 pounds of hamburgers and 3,000 slices of pizza.

The All-star game was a sell-out of 42,180 seats with standing room only. And Musciano said the reaction of fans was also akin to a home run.

The 12 All-Star Vendors Aramark brought in to strut their stuff added entertainment to the concessions offerings.

"Arnie Murphy is a good example. He can toss peanuts behind his back or over his head. He can throw up to 15 aisles away," said Musciano.

"Our All-Star vending program started back in 1994 at Three Rivers [Stadium, Pittsburgh]. We've had 12 of them out of the past 16 years at the All-Star games," Musciano said. So this was a return home of sorts.

Each of the vendors represents a Major League Baseball Aramark account. Besides

those mentioned, the accounts include: Atlanta's Turner Field, Denver's Coors Field, Houston's Minute Maid Park, Minneapolis's Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, New York's Shea Stadium, Oakland's McAfee Coliseum and Washington, D.C.'s RFK Stadium.

Vendor Murphy, known for his peanut-tossing skills, does his usual work at Houston's Minute Maid Park. Vendors are often known to fans by their nickname. Murphy, for example, is called "The Peanut Dude." Coors Field's Brent Doeden is known as "Captain Earthman" for his skillful use of a cell phone to call customers.

The dozen vendors chosen for the occasion often had many years of service such as Gary Thomas, who has spent 27 years at PNC Park.

"Our guy, Gary Thomas, it's almost impossible to describe how he does it, but he has a spiel on cold drinks that makes you think you're on a desert island and you have to have that cold drink," Musciano said.

Musciano said the event "also is a chance to showcase our employees, who are our most important asset."

The All-Star vendors "are treated as kings," Musciano said. The group was feted at dinners and tours during their several-day stay. They also wore special jerseys that announced them as All-Stars.

"It was a fun event. We created a human dimension. What we heard most often was that fans said they thought we treated them like the All-Stars," he said.

Musciano said he is weighing several other food options for the regular season, including the possibility of featuring visiting team's signature dishes when they play at PNC. — David Wilkening

Interviewed for this story: Steve Musciano, (412) 325-4453

Fifth Third Field, Toledo, Ohio



TOLEDO HAS DOUBLE THE FUN AS BASEBALL AND GOLF COINCIDE

For the first time ever and in tandem with another major event, the small city of Toledo was the site of the Triple-A All-Star baseball game. The Jamie Farr Owens Corning Classic golf tournament took place the same weekend.

"It was a very busy time, probably our busiest week ever, but we managed to cover all the bases, so to speak," said Tim Gladieux, owner of the Toledo Sports Arena whose food service company catered both events.

The highlight of the event was a joint dinner July 11 for both groups held at the arena. The sold-out event drew upwards of 2,500 people who paid \$200 a ticket.

"They considered doing separate dinners but thought it would be hard to sell 2,500

tickets twice in one week for two different events, so they decided to combine it," Gladieux said.

Almost a third of the 1,200 employees of Gladieux's company, V/Gladieux Enterprises inc., were involved in the two events. V/Gladieux Enterprises is the official food and beverage operator for Fifth Third Field, home of the minor league Toledo Mud Hens.

The sit-down dinner utilized the arena's various upper and lower concourses as well as some private meeting rooms. It took a year of careful planning.

"We had maybe 20 management meetings," Gladieux said. The event also involved four full days of preparation such as cooking and decorating.

"It was a major production," said Gladieux, involving 80 members of his wait staff, 35 bartenders, 20 caterers and 12 managers. There were 14,000 pieces of various table arrangements.

"We rolled out a red carpet over the concrete floors," he said.

Diners ate 4,000 pounds of food that included 80 roasted turkeys, 150 whole beef tenderloins, 100 gallons of Gazpacho soup, 85 cases of vegetables and 350 pounds of Red Bliss potatoes.

"We planned for it and it all went off without a glitch," Gladieux said. A major reason, he believes, is that he and his staff regularly handle large crowds while catering sporting events at the nearby University of Michigan.

He and Bob Vita, vice president of operations in charge of concessions, regularly worked 12-hour days in the weeks before the two events.

Since Gladieux has been catering to the Farr golf tournament for more than 20 years, he said, that has become somewhat routine. His company regularly provides all on-course concessions at the Highland Meadows Country Club for the golf tournament that is a non-profit fund-raiser.

"We also did the VIP and the clubhouse dining, as always," Gladieux said.

He said he was pleased with how both events turned out. "I wish we could do this every week," he said.

Many of his employees earned overtime pay. The events were also very profitable, he said.

"We don't have all the numbers yet, but the All-Star game was a record in overall sales [for Gladieux]," he said, adding that concessions sales were higher than normal in part because of the crowds attending the multiple baseball events, such as the Home Run Derby.

"All of the businesses that rent suites also spent a lot of money entertaining. They wanted to make sure they made an impression," he said.

Mud Hen fans were offered All-Star packages for \$95. They included tickets to the 19th Annual Pro Medica Health System Triple A-All-Star Game, the Home Run Derby and a FanFest that included an auction of jerseys and baseballs autographed by celebrities such as Toledo's own Jamie Farr, LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers and others. Proceeds from that event went to the Helping Hens Fund, the charitable foundation of

the Toledo Mud Hens that helps bring underprivileged children to baseball games, among other activities.

If he has any advice for others in the same position, Gladieux says: "It would be to make sure you have enough of a catering staff to handle everything, even if you have to bring in extra people."

Media attention to the two events was positive. ESPN and other major media covered both the All-Star game and the golf tournament.

The only problem over the weekend was heavy rain that washed out the second day's play at the golf tournament. "I've never seen a storm like we had that day," said Vita.

Golfers played extra holes on succeeding days and the final 18 holes on Sunday had sunny weather. — David Wilkening

Interviewed for this story: Tim Gladieux and Bob Vita, (419) 473-3009

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS USEFUL (AND FREE) TOOL! FREE HELP WANTED ADS!

Venues Today now offers **free help wanted** listings in our e-newsletters. To submit your listing or for further information, e-mail April Stroud at: April@venuestoday.com. Please look over the submission guidelines before sending (see spec link below).

Just another way that *Venues Today* is YOUR source for information.

[Click here for submission guidelines](#)

SHORT TAKES

ARROWHEAD POND BECOMES HONDA CENTER IN OCTOBER

Arrowhead Pond of Anaheim (Calif.) will become Honda Center in October, marking the first name change for the 13-year-old arena and the first arena naming rights deal for American Honda Motor Co. The change will take place in October, prior to the Mighty Ducks hockey season.

Contacts: Julie Sediq, (714) 704-2412 and Sage Marie, (310) 783-3163

IKON CENTER CHANGES NAME TO TACO JOHN'S EVENTS CENTER

The Ikon Center, a 2,100-seat multipurpose ice and roller rink in Cheyenne, Wyoming, has been renamed Taco John's Events Center effective tomorrow, July 20. Taco John's International is headquartered in Cheyenne. The venue is managed by Global Spectrum.

Contact: Kim Zirfas, (307) 433-0024

KALAMAZOO TEAM AND STADIUM SOLD

The Kalamazoo Wings and Wings Stadium have been sold to Greenleaf Holdings. The transfer will take 18 months. In 2007 Greenleaf takes over management of the venue and hockey team from Stadium Management Co. In 2008, it becomes sold owner. The change requires approvals from the Michigan Liquor Control Commission and the United

Hockey League. The Kalamazoo City Commission approved the transfer July 17. Besides the 8,000-seat stadium, the deal includes the 1,400-seat Annex and the Cube, both part of the complex. The hockey franchise was founded in 1974.

Contact: *Wings Stadium, (269) 345-1125*

KANSAS CITY PAC GETS A NEW CEO

Jane Chu has been named president and CEO of the Metropolitan Kansas City Performing Arts Center. The \$326 million center is scheduled for completion in December 2009. Chu had been vice president of community investment at the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and vice president of external relations at Union Station Kansas City Inc. She also served as fund executive for the Kauffman Fund for Kansas.

Contact: *MKCPAC, (816) 932-1282*

COREL ANTIED UP TO 'UN-NAME' AN ARENA

Recent financial filings reveal that Corel Corp. agreed last fall to pay \$2.3 million (U.S.) over three years to have its name removed from what is now the Scotiabank Place, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. According to an article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, Corel paid \$724,000 in December to Capital Sports Properties, which owns the arena, and will also make biannual payments of \$264,000 through June 2008. Corel originally acquired the naming rights in 1996 for \$23 million over 20 years, but the firm was then acquired by Vector Capital. Scotiabank agreed to pay roughly \$17.6 million over 15 years in January of this year. The Ottawa Senators of the National Hockey League play at Scotiabank Place.

Contact: *Scotiabank Place, (613) 599-0100*

HELP WANTED

Venues Today now offers **free help wanted listings** in the e-newsletter. For more information or to submit listings, e-mail April Stroud, Advertising/Production Manager at: April@venuestoday.com

[Click here to view free help wanted listing guidelines](#)

Box Office/Parking Mgr & Event Mgr - Greater Richmond Convention Ctr

Global Spectrum seeks two skilled, detailed and customer service oriented individuals for the positions of Box Office / Parking Manager and Event Manager. Located in the heart of downtown Richmond, the \$170 million Greater Richmond Convention Center is the centerpiece of a massive downtown revitalization plan, and is the largest convention facility in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[To learn more and apply online, please visit www.global-spectrum.com](http://www.global-spectrum.com)

To submit news or information to ***Venues Today*** contact:

Linda Deckard, Publisher, Editor-in-chief
(714) 378-5400, ext. 22
linda@venuestoday.com

Dave Brooks, Staff Writer
(714) 378-5400, ext. 24

dave@venuestoday.com

For advertising information, contact:

Sue Nichols, Eastern Region

(615) 662-0252

sue@venuestoday.com

Pauline Davis, Lower Central Region

(615) 356-0398

pauline@venuestoday.com

April Stroud, Upper Central & Western Region

(714) 378-5400 ext. 23

april@venuestoday.com

You are receiving this weekly e-newsletter as part of your annual subscription to **Venues Today**.

Remember that you can also access the **Venues Today** archives as part of this subscription at www.venuestoday.com. [Unsubscribe](#)



This message was sent by Venues Today using VerticalResponse's [iBuilder](#)®



Venues Today
P.O. Box 2540
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
USA

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.