





Sky Rocket is a Blast! by Maggie Altman

Without a doubt, the region's most anticipated new ride of 2010 was Kennywood's LSM-launched Sky Rocket coaster from Premier Rides. But doubts there were: Would the harsh winter halt the construction? What would the ride experience through the inversions be like? And most importantly, would the coaster be open in time for Coaster Con XXXIII?

The ride was still being tested at the beginning of the Con with the anticipated

opening the week after the convention. However, Jeff Filicko, Kennywood's public relations manager, announced during the opening reception at Kennywood on Sunday that crews were working 24 hours a day to have it operable during the Con.

While not promising that *Sky Rocket* would be ready, he advised everyone to attend all functions at the park and listen for any special announcements. The eagerly awaited announcement came at the start of the Annual Business Meeting on Tuesday night (June 23) when Jeff informed



the attendees that they each would be given one ride on Sky Rocket following the park's closing that evening. As it turned out, the Coaster Con XXXIII attendees were the first to ride Sky Rocket after only the Premier Rides crew, even before Jeff or any other Kennywood employees. The unanimous reaction was that Kennywood had a hit a surprisingly smooth ride even through the transitions between elements — and with unexpected moments of

airtime during the inversions!

Testing continued for the rest of the week in order to implement two-train operation, to increase capacity before the coaster would open to the public. Media Day was held on Monday June 28 with the coaster officially opening to the public on the following day.

Western Pennsylvania Region

Our sincerest appreciation goes to Jeff Filicko and the other Kennywood employees who went above and beyond to ensure that each Con attendee would get a ride on *Sky Rocket*.

ACEers seemed to have nothing but great things to say about *Sky Rocket*. Here are some of their comments:

Sky Rocket has set the new standard for 21st century coasters: smooth yet edgy, with thrills and surprises coming at you in perfect rhythm.

~Linda Spar --ACE Western Pennsylvania Twitter Coordinator

Sky Rocket is particularly surprising with so many distinct coaster elements -- steep dives, a fast launch, overbanked curves, zig-zag directional changes and bunny hops -- all while being wonderfully smooth. **~Tim Baldwin --ACE Publications Director**

Sky Rocket is an incredibly smooth launching coaster, suitable for the entire family! It is also re-rideable.

~Chuck George

Sky Rocket provides a comfortable, unique ride experience with plenty of airtime, including during inversions!

~Ken Riling

Who could have imagined there'd be so much upside-down airtime?

~Lee Ann Draud, RollerCoaster!/ACE News Associate Editor

Ride Sky Rocket in any seat and you will experience many unexpected surprises

~Marshall Flickinger

Editors Note: Sharp eyed readers may have noticed that the short flat section at the top of the first hill, as shown on the cover of the September 2009 issue of The Fun Times, was eliminated. *Sky Rocket* incorporates the constant radius 180 degree "top hat" element similar to the previous launch coasters (*Xcelerator, Top Thrill Dragster, Kingda Ka, Hypersonic XLC*).

ACEwesternPA.org

The Fun Times September 2010



Hello and welcome to the Fall 2010 edition of *The Fun Times*. Wow!!! What a year!!! ACE western Pennsylvania was once again the host region for the annual ACE convention, the only region to host a convention four times. Also, as of this writing, the Conneaut Lake Park *Blue Streak* roller coaster finished in the #1 position to receive a \$50,000 donation from the Pepsi Refresh Everything program. Thank you all for the votes to put the *Blue Streak* in the #1 position. Thanks to your continued voting, the coaster won the cash donation for its restoration efforts and it will also be back in operational status. See you all in the queues.

~Matt



The Queue Line

ACE Western Pennsylvania extends a warm welcome to its newest members.

Collin Brown	McDonald
William Blakley	Valencia
Cameron Clerici	Beaver
Joseph Comm	West Mifflin
Travis Cramer	Huntingdon
Sharen Duff	Pittsburgh
Daniel Frazier	Beaver Falls
Greys Landing Greyhound Placement	Windsor Hts WV
Ann Haibach	Waterford
E J Kleckner	McMurray
Don Lindich	Pittsburgh
Dennis Maclay	Grove City
Alaina Marshall	Beaver Falls
Avery Matthews	Perryopolis
Colin Miller	Murrysville
Anna Rastatter	Beaver Falls
Luke Sadecky	New Kensington
Cindy, Connor & Randy Schrott	West Mifflin
Caitlyn Sechler	
Edward Sperl Jr	Pittsburgh
David Steidl	Huntingdon
Daniel Swartz	Clairton
Nicholas Talotta	Cheswick
Lyndsey Vogler	Beaver Falls
Cameron Zapadka	Beaver Falls

CHATTER!

Congratulations to **Ron Gaston** on the birth of his fifth grandson, Braden Vasquez, on June 29th. It's the first child for Ron's daughter and her husband Tonya and Steve Vasquez . . . Get Well wishes and a speedy recovery to Robin Mullen who recently injured her foot . . . Condolences to **Terry Hahner** and her family on the loss of her father, Harold Mabold, who passed away in January . . . Lisa Corbly was one of the Bronze Medal winners at the Coaster Com XXXIII Midway Olympics for being a member of one of the two teams that tied for third place . . . **Dave Altman** was a passenger in a mid-1960s Ford GT40 race car for a lap around the BeaveRun road course reaching speeds in excess of 140 mph down the back straight . . . Maggie Altman, Dolores Cavic and Elaine Linkenheimer were volunteers during the 2010 LPGA Womens Open held at Oakmont Country Club in July . . . Maggie Altman was one of over 700 Zumba dancers who performed on Federal Street outside PNC Park prior to the July 2 Pirates game . . . Dave Altman was a member of one of the six teams that won the corporate level 2010 George Westinghouse Signature Awards from a field of over 100 candidate programs . . . Maggie Altman recently returned from a trip to coasterless North Dakota, but while on the trip, she was able to ride the coasters at Nickelodeon Universe (formerly Camp Snoopy) at the Mall of America outside of Minneapolis . . . July 2010 turned out to be a busy month regarding media exposure for our regional rep team: Bill Linkenheimer III appeared on PCNC Night Talk on July 27 to discuss Conneaut Lake Park and the Pepsi Refresh Everything voting for Blue Streak . .

. Dave Altman taped a 9-minute segment on roller coasters for National Public Radio's "The Michael Eric Dyson Show" . . . Dave Hahner was a guest on Robert Mangino's show on KDKA Radio on July 1, discussing Kennywood, his Kennywood book, ACE, Sky Rocket, and the ACE Roller Coaster Landmark plaques for Jack Rabbit and Racer . . . on the same day, Jim Futrell was a guest on KDKA's Mike Pintek Show...and former Kennywood president Carl Hughes was a talk show guest that day as well . . . The aforementioned names don't hold a candle to the media darling of 2010 though. After taking 90 rides on Jack Rabbit on August 15 to reach his 4,000th lifetime ride, Vic Kleman appeared on all three local television news stations, the video and information from these broadcasts made their way to many other television and radio stations throughout the country, the Associated Press, the Yahoo home page and Fox News, resulting in media outlets numbering in the countless hundreds worldwide . . .

Congratulations to **Evan Smith**, who rode his 300th coaster, *Great American Scream Machine*, in July. He made it to Six Flags Great Adventure to ride the venerable Arrow coaster before it closed forever later that month, and he made it a point to have his first ride on its red "Freedom Train" . . .

Have some Chatter for us? Did you or an ACE member you know



retire, get a promotion, lose a pet, hit the lottery, take the trip of a lifetime, appear on television, or get arrested for running across the field during a Steelers game? SHARE IT WITH US! Email us at Chatter@ACEWesternPA.org or send us a note via conventional mail to the editorial address.

ACE Fall Fantasy at Kennywood

Who needs ERT? An Informal event brings ACEers together to share a Jack Rabbit ride with a celebrity and star in Kennywood's parade.

by Chuck George

August 15th was a hot and humid day, but that didn't stop Vic Kleman from achieving his goal of 90 consecutive rides on Kennywood's 90 year old *Jack Rabbit*.

His marathon began at 11 a.m. with his first ride partner Jeff Filicko, the park's public relations manager, followed by



Jeff Filicko and Vic Kleman on the first ride of the marathon

general manager Jerome Gibas and ride operations manager Marie Ruby. After the park dignitaries had their rides, some 26 ACEers took their turns -- some of them riding two or three times filling empty slots on the roster. Assistant regional rep Jim Kline was in charge of organizing the roster allowing Vic's friends and fans from ACE to get their rides with Vic.

Vic's final ride of the session, his 90th, came at 4:45 p.m. and the train was filled entirely with ACE members. It was five and a half hours of non-stop riding for Vic. While he had a quick sip of water every so often, but that was it -- he took no

breaks! To add to the accomplishment, Vic's 90th ride of the day was also his 4000th lifetime ride on the newly designated ACE Roller Coaster Landmark, which he started riding in 1959.



Vic Kleman during one of his many interviews

Does anyone care to top that?

All three local television news stations were there to cover his final ride. Of course, Vic was the star and certainly deserved the publicity! (See Chatter on page 2.)

Later that evening, 26 lucky ACEers rode on the Kennywood trolley, collectively serving as the grand marshall of that evening's Fall Fantasy Parade. One can only assume that this was the most enthusiastic crowd the trolley will see this year. The day provided a fun time for all!

Special thanks to regional representative Bill Linkenheimer Ill for setting up the informal event and especially to our friends at Kennywood for making it all possible.

Local members support ACE at Kings Dominion auction



During the ACE Summer Conference in August at Kings Dominion, two young members represented ACE Western Pennsylvania quite well as they drove up bidding prices and were the winning bidders for the two prize items of the auction and the only two that were sold as part of an oral auction. Chase Fiore (left) is the new owner of a special edition remotecontrolled Italian Job Turbo Coaster Mini Cooper, a piece that the park mailed out as part of a VIP invitation when the Italian Job Turbo Coaster opened during the park's Paramount era. This particular car was the last one left at Kings Dominion. Dale Johnston (center) successfully bid on a collector's item vinyl map that once hung in the park. Like the Mini Cooper, the map is from Kings Dominion's days as a Paramount Park and features some of the attraction names and logos associated with the entertainment company. ACE Western Pennsylvania regional rep Bill Linkenheimer III (right), who presided over the auction, joins them for the photo op.

ACEwesternPA.org



A world of thanks for welcoming the world of ACE!

As you are surely well aware, this past June western Pennsylvania played host to Coaster Con XXXIII, the 2010 edition of ACE's annual convention. Members from 37 states and two foreign countries were welcomed into our region that week. It was my intention for ACE Western Pennsylvania and its members to roll out the red carpet to welcome the visitors by extending hospitality toward them and planning peripheral activities to make the event even more memorable. If I were taking a survey to rate how

pleased I am with how our region's members stepped up to the plate to accomplish these goals, "far exceeded expectations" would be the only option I could consider.

Bill Linkenheimer III

Let's start with all of our region's members who attended Coaster Con. Out of some 405 attendees, a whopping 61 reside right here in Western Pennsylvania and that doesn't even include Lee Ann Draud from Philadelphia or Steve Smith from Ohio, both of whom consider themselves to be ACE Western Pennsylvanians, perhaps deservedly so considering that they never miss any event that is held here. Regional members representing 15% of the attendance for a six-day national event held entirely within our region is REALLY impressive, to say the very least. There were dozens of reasons for opting out. While the \$219 registration fee was an outstanding bargain, the perceived value can be diminished when it's at the parks in your own backyard that you go to frequently. And one really has to think twice about taking a week off from work to take a vacation in western Pennsylvania. In the end, pride and passion prevailed – pride in welcoming your fellow ACEers to your hometown and passion for ACE and the great traditional parks in the region.

What's equally impressive is that some who weren't able to attend the event still volunteered time out of their week to volunteer and serve ACE during the Con. What impressed me even more was that three of those non-attendee volunteers who so graciously gave their time were age 21 or younger and volunteering to help ACE for their very first time. Four volunteers who attended the Con also fall into this age category and another two volunteers are under age 30. Upon noticing this fact, I felt that ACE's future suddenly seemed brighter.

It's also worth noting that your regional rep team had 100% attendance: Matt Adler, Dave Altman, Lisa Corbly, Steve Corbly, Dave Hahner, Jim Kline and yours truly all not only participated in Coaster Con XXXIII, but took active volunteer roles as well.

Guide to Drive - Coaster Con XXXIII, a document created at the regional level to guide our visitors through the poorly marked and awkward streets of western Pennsylvania was very well received and earned many compliments. While many provided input, extra special thanks go to Dave Altman and Rich Koppelman, for going the extra mile – literally and figuratively. Dave drove alternative routes between Monroeville and Kennywood several times, while Rich drove several routes to Waldameer in Erie and stayed in close contact with PennDOT to find out about possible road construction.

Guide to Ride - Coaster Con XXXIII provided details, often with pictures, of the coasters in and around our region. Guide to Play - Western Pennsylvania, Guide to Dine - Pittsburgh and Guide to Party - Pittsburgh, covered attractions, restaurants and nightlife respectively. All were collaborative efforts, but none would have been possible without a lot of time invested by Lee Ann Draud from a distant Pittsburgh "suburb" across the state.

The term "stepping up to the plate" took on new meaning as plans for Coaster Con XXXIII kicked into high gear. Ed and Matt Adler carted dozens of boxes into the ACE Vendor Room at the Doubletree Hotel in Monroeville, where they set up the ACE Preservation Fund Sales Table and raised hundreds of dollars for that cause. Roseanne Nyczaj co-organized the Midway Olympics and brought real flames to the Midway Olympic torch held by Marty Moltz as he paddled his way across the lagoon at Kennywood. Dave Hahner took the reins of organizing an informal regional event

within the convention, allowing attendees to stop at Fun Fore All for a ride on Fiesta Express and take advantage of other special opportunities (see article on page 7). Dave Hahner also created an amazing history-oriented scavenger hunt for attendees to take part in at Kennywood, prompting many to learn much more about the park than they had ever imagined. Ryan Lucas stepped up in a big way, coordinating a miniature golf tournament at Fun Fore All; adding a surprising amount of input to the aforementioned "Guides;" and co-organizing the Midway Olympics, which included soliciting a lot of input on the scoring of the games, from his in-house consultants – his parents and sister.



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The regional volunteer who falls last on the alphabetical list comes in first place for effort. Sarah Windisch went above and beyond planning for and hosting the ACE Western Pennsylvania Hospitality Center, which was open for two afternoons at the Doubletree Hotel, during two meals at Kennywood and during the day at Waldameer. Thanks to Sarah, thousands of brochures and information pieces on local attractions were distributed to out-of-town guests, proving that her time hauling these items around was well spent. Likewise, plenty of good advice was given from her team of hospitable volunteers.

Another volunteer who answers the call of duty more times than I can count is graphic artist and "Logo Guy" Mike Matscherz. Mike created the Coaster Con Pittsburgh logo used on the teaser tee shirts) and also put together the teaser video that's still available to view on CoasterConPittsburgh.org. Mike also did the layout and graphic design for *Guide to Ride – Coaster Con XXXIII*, *Guide to Dine*, *Guide to Play*, *Guide to Party*, the Coaster Con Rest Stop (at Fun Fore All) event flier and the Kennywood Sign of the Times scavenger hunt. In addition, Mike gave a presentation on ACE's 2009 trip to Spain during the convention.

During the event itself, regional hosts made up the entire staff for the ACE Photo Contest, Midway Olympics, ACE Western Pennsylvania Hospitality Center, ACE Regional Newsletter Contest, Scavenger Hunt and Coaster Con XXXIII Rest Stop at Fun Fore All (and accompanying mini-golf tournament). To the 38 of you who helped in advance of and during Coaster Con, you have my gratitude. And so that you may have everyone else's gratitude, your names are as follows:

Ed Adler
Matt Adler
Maggie Altman
Jason Ballard
Nikki Blake
Pat Borden
Tarryn Borden
Dolores Cavic
Lisa Corbly
Steve Corbly
Lee Ann Draud
Chase Fiore
Edmund Gaskill

John Gasper
Dave Hahner Jr.
David Hahner III
Mary Ann Jaram
Bill Linkenheimer Jr.
Elaine Linkenheimer
April Lucas
Dave Lucas
Ryan Lucas
Val Lucas
Corey Maley
Elena Marziale
Stephen Marziale

Ron Mazur
Adam Napotnik
Tina Napotnik-Sepcic
Roseanne Nyczaj
Carl Panko
Ken Riling
Evan Smith
Steve Smith
Linda Spar
Mark Stepanian
Glenn Thompson
Sarah Windisch

Rep Rap

by Jim Kline

"What's it like to be an assistant regional representative?" I have been asked by family, friends and some ACE members what it is like to be an assistant rep for ACE Western Pennsylvania. My response is always that I like being a part of and having a hands-on approach to our region. I never realized what the assistant reps did until I



became one. There is a lot of behind the scenes volunteering that they do to make each event a success. Being an assistant regional representative is a wonderful experience. It gives you many opportunities to give back to your club. I believe it is something that as members we should all consider doing at some time to help our club become a better organization.

In this position you have so many chances to give back, helping and planning the various events that ACE Western Pennsylvania holds each year, including CoasterBash! and KennyKon. There is so much that goes into each and every event that is held: determining menus; contacting the presenters, vendors and park representatives for donations of door prizes; setting up the facility at which the event is being held; and making the arrangements for ERT, etc. It is challenging at times but very rewarding in the end.

I most enjoy meeting and talking with members from our region, as well as with members nationwide, and getting to know more about what goes on in their respective regions.

I can honestly tell you that I feel better knowing that I am making our region better and helping the organization in accomplishing what ACE is all about.

ALLEGHENY MOUNTAIN MADNESS

by Dave Altman

What does one do as an opening act to Coaster Con XXXIII that featured four host parks that are all over 100 years old? Well, you plan a regional add-on day that visits the two other parks in the region that have also surpassed the centennial mark, Lakemont Park in Altoona and DelGrosso's Amusement Park in Tipton. These two parks were a perfect fit with the "headliner" – the 2010 ACE convention, and its tagline of "Over a Century of Fun!"

The day started as bright and sunny, so much so that the registration tables at Lakemont Park had to be moved into the shade to prevent the registration volunteers from being blinded by the sun. After receiving their registration packets, the attendees enjoyed 90 minutes of ERT on *Leap the Dips*, the relocated *Skyliner* and one of the few remaining Chance *Toboggans* before the park opened to the general public at 11 a.m.

Not only is Lakemont Park – founded in 1894 – over 100 years old, but also, its signature attraction, the 1902 *Leap the Dips*, is the world's oldest roller coaster. Fully restored and reopened in 1999, it is testimony to enthusiast support and preservation. Although the ACE Roller Coaster Landmark is now an up-charge attraction (not included in the pay-one-price), attendees were given two passes to use throughout the day.

During the all-you-can-eat picnic lunch, Lakemont Park general manager Barry Kumpf addressed the 182 in attendance (including six Canadians). To our dismay, he



Barry Kumpf addresses the picnic attendees at Lakemont Park during Allegheny Mountain Madness.

announced that he would be leaving the park after 16 years to become the general manager of the Blair County Convention Center. Barry also announced that Lakemont Park would be instituting an annual Gary Baker Memorial Day in honor of the part-time Lakemont Park employee, ACE Western Pennsylvania assistant regional rep and former ACE events director (see article on page 7)

After lunch, attendees could choose to spend more time at Lakemont Park and The Island waterpark or make the short eight mile drive to DelGrosso's Amusement Park in nearby Tipton.

DelGrosso's Amusement Park was formerly known as Bland's Park which was founded in 1906. Although the DelGrosso family acquired the park in 1946, the name change did not occur until 2000. The park is home to a Reverchon Crazy Mouse and Fajume Wacky Worm which were joined by four new rides this year relocated from Cypress Gardens.



David Hahner and Michael Tkach get blasted on X-Scream at DelGrosso's Amusement Park during Allegheny Mountain Madness.

Event attendees were free to enjoy their all-day ride and water park pass while waiting for the spaghetti dinner which also featured Murf's (the late family matriarch Mafalda) famous potato salad. During dinner, DelGrosso's general manager, Carl Crider (the oldest of the 23 DelGrosso grandchildren) provided a brief history of the family-run park "that spaghetti sauce built." The park was originally purchased by Fred DelGrosso in 1946 as a place to develop and produce their sauces and grew into the successful food company it is today. Among the most popular door prizes were the gift boxes of DelGrosso's Famiglia line of sauces.

Following dinner, the attendees were free to remain until closing, return to Lakemont Park or drive to Pittsburgh for the start of Coaster Con XXXIII the next day.

ACE Western Pennsylvania is unique within ACE as having six amusement parks that have survived in excess of 100 operating seasons. And we are fortunate that we were able to showcase these six survivors to our fellow enthusiasts this summer.

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First Annual Gary Baker Memorial Day

by Tony Colega and Ryan Lucas

Lakemont Park in Altoona, Pennsylvania hosted the first ever Gary Baker Memorial Day on July 24, 2010 which would have been Gary's 61st birthday. Lakemont Park was where I (Tony) first met Gary Baker before becoming a member of ACE. It was back in the early 1990s and Gary was in front of Leap the Dips with a prize wheel helping to raise money so that Leap the Dips could eventually be reopened. A ride that for many, many years was listed as SBNO (Standing But Not Operating) and in danger of being lost forever, was triumphantly reopened in 1999 and remains operating to this day due in very large part to the intercession, persistence and dedication of Gary Baker.



Gary Baker and Bill Linkenheimer III at Lakemont in 1986

As a tribute to Gary, his dedication to Lakemont Park, roller coasters and the amusement industry, Lakemont Park offered ACE and all other card-carrying members of the amusement industry a free ride and slide pass on July 24, a tradition that will continue on the last Saturday of each July for many years to come, thanks to the generosity of the staff and ownership of Lakemont Park.

The day started out very warm with the temperature already in the 80s by 11 a.m. under an intense sun, but there was a strong, constant breeze that helped us to stay cool. There were no formal ERT sessions scheduled, but rather, there were numerous ITOTS (Informal Take-Over Times) at various rides and attractions in the park where we could show up at the specified times to ride/participate as a group. With the small number of the general public present that day, the ITOTs almost ended up looking like ERT!

The first ITOT was on the *Skyliner* roller coaster and many of us were allowed to take repeat rides without ever leaving the ride platform and/or our seats. At this point, there were about five ACEers present. From there, we moved on to the train with its unique "Ponyshoe Curve" tribute to the nearby famous Horseshoe Curve. Our attention then turned towards Lakemont Park's biggest claim to fame, *Leap the Dips* – the

world's oldest roller coaster. After two and half hours in the hot summer sun (temperatures were now in the 90s) we headed over to The Diner to enjoy a relaxing lunch in the shade. By this time, there were about 15 ACEers in the park.

Chicken tenders and burgers were had by all. But instead of getting back to the thrills, attendees took their turn at the miniature links that Gary enjoyed so much. Dave Lucas shot the low round of the day to win the first annual Gary Baker Memorial Miniature Golf Tournament. ITOTs followed on the Tin Lizzy antique cars, *Toboggan* and *Skyliner*. The hot day was able to hold off the rain until the evening and allowed everybody a chance to remember a dear friend of our region.

Coaster Con XXXIII Rest Stop

by Sarah Windisch

On the next to last day of Coaster Con XXXIII, many attendees took a "rest stop" at Fun Fore All in Cranberry Township as they trekked north on I-79 to Conneaut Lake Park. The Coaster Con XXXIII Rest Stop was an informal event sponsored by ACE Western Pennsylvania so that Con attendees could experience the region's youngest park. Not only were Con attendees offered a complimentary ride on *Fiesta Express*, the 2003 Zamperla mini-mouse coaster, but also a two-hour deeply discounted attraction pass that included everything but the redemption games!

Some visitors participated in a mini-golf tournament on the beautiful "Cave Course," which was won by David Klawe of Tustin, California. The runners-up were John Gasper, Jay Trembulak and Karen Kaiser.

Photo by Dave Hahner The Shipple Committee alast

Mini Golf tournament winners are from left to right, John Gasper, Jay Trembulak, David Klawe, Karen Kaiser.

Others enjoyed the coaster, go-karts, the other rides (basically if you fit on it, you were allowed to ride it), games and food that Fun Fore All has available. It was also a chance to sit down inside and socialize out of the sun and allow the many newcomers to the area to see what surprises lay in the northern suburban family entertainment center. It certainly was Fun...Fore All!

ACEwesternPA.org

Calendar of Regional Events

KennyKon XXI / ACE Phantom Fright Night Kennywood

West Mifflin, PA
Sunday, October 10, 2010

CoasterBash! XXII Salvatore's Pittsburgh, PA

Saturday, March 5, 2011

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A full-color version of *The Fun Times* is available online for download on the region's Website above.



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