

Vol. 22, No. 3 September, 2012

Conneaut Lake Park and Waldameer host CoasterFest - see page 6

The FUNOFFICIAL Newsletter of ACE Western Pennsylvania

It was one WILD weekend!

ACE Goes IdleWILD II

by Brenton Asti

On an unusually brisk cloudy July Saturday in western Pennsylvania, 116 wild ACEers and new ones met at the #1 Best Kids Park, Idlewild and SoakZone in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, for the second, "ACE Goes IdleWILD" event. Previously in 2007, ACE held its first ACE Goes IdleWILD event, which coincided with the park's new family ride, "The Flying Aces." At the 2007 event, ACEers received ERT on Wild Mouse, Rollo Coaster and Flying Aces as well as a delicious catered lunch. ACEers who attended this year's event were in for a lot of surprises! Prior to the event, ACEers were informed that Wild Mouse would not be operating during their visit. Idlewild, realizing this as disappointing news, offered up ERT on Carousel during the morning ERT in addition to the already-scheduled ERT on Rollo Coaster and Flying Aces; and Caterpillar was added to the evening ERT in addition to the already-scheduled Rollo Coaster. What else did Idlewild have up their sleeves? Much more!

During registration, Jeff Croushore, Idlewild's public relations manager and other smiling Team Members handed out a slew of FREE stuff to each attendee, including a 2012 souvenir cup, a laptop cover with



Jeff Croushore gets dunked! 'photo byJoel Brewton

the appropriate Idlewild and SoakZone logo, a beautiful picture frame for all those wild moments, and lastly, a custom neon-yellow T-shirt with the Mike Matscherzdesigned ACE goes IdleWILD logo on the back while the front proudly had the Idlewild and SoakZone logo. If this wasn't enough already,

KennyKon XXIII by Stephen Marziale

Eerily thick fog filled the Pittsburgh air on the morning of July 22; ACEers coming to Kennywood from the Rankin Bridge were unable to see the usual scenic view of Phantom's Revenge. 173 members from 12 states and Ontario attended KennyKon XXIII and those who braved the morning fog were rewarded with Ice Cream For Breakfast to welcome them to Kennywood. For \$3, ACEers were able to purchase a cup of ice cream complete with various cereals as toppings. The Ice Cream For Breakfast raised \$183 for Give Kids the World, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing children with life-threatening illnesses with a stay in a cost-free magical resort while they visit Central Florida attractions such as Walt Disney World. The morning continued with ERT on Racer and Sky Rocket as well as a behind-the-scenes photo opportunity of Sky Rocket.



Throughout the day, attendees enjoyed many ITOT opportunities on Kennywood classics like Jack Rabbit, Whip, Kangaroo, Turtle and Kennywood's newest addition, Black Widow. These ITOTs were particularly special as ACEers celebrated the 50th anniversary of Kangaroo and the 85th anniversaries of Whip and the Turtle (special thanks to Kennywood's Marie Ruby for personally operating Turtle during the ITOT

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Hello and welcome to the fall issue of The Fun Times. As the coaster season winds to a close for our region, we now look forward to all the fall holiday events sponsored by our local parks. What will next year hold for our region? Only time and CoasterBash! will tell!

See you in the queues!

Matt

THE QUEUE LINE

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

Randall Barber	Farrell, PA
Adam Carlini	
Diane Crothers	
Ricky Drop	Point Marion, PA
Christian & Irene Florio	Wheeling, WV
Jason Fritzman	Moundsville, WV
Hayden Gibson	Pittsburgh, PA
Kenneth Goehring	Harmony, PA
Annemarie Grella	McDonald, PA
Joshua Jebbia	Wheeling, WV
Megan Merikas	Pittsburgh, PA
lan Yuhouse	

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Subscriptions are free to all ACE members residing in the Western Pennsylvania region and are \$4.00 per year for ACE members elsewhere in the United States. Direct all correspondence to: **THE FUN TIMES**; **PO Box 15353**; **Pittsburgh**, **PA 15237-0553**, **USA**.

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Congratulations to Jason and Shannon Eyer, on the birth of their daughter, Claire Alexandra Eyer, on July 1 . . . congratulations to Mike Matscherz, whose photo taken during ACE's Scandinavian Sojourn took third Place in ACE's Annual Photo Contest held during Coaster Con XXXV at Dollywood . . . and speaking of Dollywood, when Dolly Parton entertained the ACEers in a private mountaintop concert, young Veronica Brocato was one of the few to successfully nab an autograph from the fabled star . . . in addition to his photo achievements, Mike Matscherz turned 30 in July . . . Vic Kleman celebrated his 80th birthday in late August by taking 80 rides on Kennywood's Jack Rabbit and several friends joined him for the rides. Besides a plethora of ACE members, Kennywood officials including Jerome Gibas and Andy Quinn joined him, as well as former Kennywood PR manager Mary Lou Rosemeyer (lots of pictures and complete details will be available in the January 2013 issue of The Fun Times) . . . Jeff Filicko and Marie Ruby of Kennywood, and Brandon Leonatti of Idlewild were in attendance at Amusement Today's Golden Ticket Awards, held in early September at Dollywood. As with Coaster Con XXXV, Dolly Parton was present, but these lucky folks each got to have their picture taken with Dolly! . . .

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



On August 25, Sarah Windisch celebrated her 40th birthday at Kennywood among family members and friends from both within ACE and otherwise.



by Bill Linkenheimer III

I do my fair share of traveling and visiting amusement parks in spring and summer, but in autumn my workload with my job (my real job, not the volunteer ACE job!), really picks up and travel to parks minimizes. As a result, I haven't made it to as many park Halloween events as I would like to.

With the convenience of Kennywood reasonably close to my home and work, I've managed to visit at least two nights during each of the last ten years of Phantom Fright Nights. Otherwise, I made it to Lakemont Park once or twice back in the day when they did the park up for Halloween, I went to Cedar Point for Halloweekends once many years ago, and I was fortunate enough to visit Fright Fest at Six Flags Great America one year when I was in the area for one of the ACE executive committee's meetings.

Last year, on the cool October evening following the 10th annual ACE Phantom Fright Night informal event at Kennywood, some other ACE members and I (which ended up to be nearly a dozen in total), met up at Conneaut Lake Park to check out the Ghost Lake event held there – and boy, were we blown away with the experience. Like everything at Conneaut Lake Park, it was low tech and old-fashioned, but incredibly high on the creativity scale, and of course, it helps that the park and many of its buildings look haunted and scary at night to begin with! I wondered why I hadn't made time to make the trip in years past and vowed not to miss it again.

The event is well-organized and based on nine levels of fear. After paying at the ticket windows at the park's entrance, one is supplied with a passport of sorts, which is punched at each of the stops on the nine levels of fear, allowing one visit to each. They also request that you visit them in order, which results in a sort of counter-clockwise tour of the park that works far more efficiently than I would have guessed.

The event utilizes many of the park's old buildings and guests go into buildings and places that they normally wouldn't go during normal park operation – many of them naturally creepy and creaky. Add in a whole lot of darkness, a lot of good scare actors and enough scenes to keep things interesting, and you have quite the awesome haunted tour, that has such an old-fashioned charm, that it just fits in so organically perfect at Conneaut Lake Park. The inclusion of Devil's Den this year should enhance it even more!

After our amazing evening of fun in darkness and fog in 2011, we all agreed that it would make a great informal event, so on Saturday, October 20, ACE Western Pennsylvania introduces ACE Ghost Lake at Conneaut Lake Park. Mid America Events, the promoter/organizer of Ghost Lake has graciously offered us a small discount, giving even more incentive. Regrettably, my work schedule will not allow me to attend, but I sincerely hope that you give it a try and if you've never been to it, I hope that you're as pleasantly surprised as I was last year!

COLDEN TICKET AWARDS AWARDS BEST OF THE BEST!

Regional parks win Golden Ticket Awards

The traditional parks of western Pennsylvania brought home their share of 2012 Golden Ticket Awards, following a ceremony held at Dollywood on September 8. Idlewild claimed the prestigious honor for the third year in a row and by their biggest margin yet. We're also excited that Waldameer's Ravine Flyer II is ranked among the world's 10 best wooden coasters! The awards are presented by Amusement Today. The following is a summary of the awards received, categorized by park:

Kennywood

#1 Best Funhouse/Walk-Through Attraction
(Noah's Ark)

#4 Best Halloween Event
(Phantom Fright Nights)

#11 Best Steel Roller Coaster (Phantom's Revenge)

#15 Best Wooden Roller Coaster (Thunderbolt)

#16 Best Wooden Roller Coaster (Jack Rabbit)

#42 Best Wooden Roller Coaster (Racer)

Conneaut Lake Park #44 Best Wooden Roller Coaster (Blue Streak)

Idlewild and SoakZone #1 Best Children's Park

Waldameer & Water World #6 Best Wooden Roller Coaster (Ravine Flyer II)

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KennyKon XXIII

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session). Although, since the line for Black Widow was understandably long, most attendees skipped the Black Widow ITOT in favor of corralling under a tent to avoid the sun and heat.

Many attendees also participated in the Tickets to Ride contest which involved contestants collecting tickets from various game stands, park employees and ACE members spread throughout the park. For



example, if the clue was "Find a member of the ACE Archives Committee from Philadelphia," contestants would need to search Kennywood, find that person, and collect a ticket from them. The contest ended in a four-way tie and each winner received a VIP Coaster Tour from Kennywood.

Following a delicious dinner, a bumper from the *Thunderbolt* blue train was auctioned off for \$180, which benefits the ACE Preservation Fund. ACE also congratulated Tony and Noreen Ubinas on their sixth anniversary, naturally spent at Kennywood.

After the park closed, attendees enjoyed another KennyKon favorite: nighttime ERT on *Phantom's Revenge*. ERT did not disappoint as two-train operation allowed many riders to take frequent back-to-back rides.

At the end of the day, KennyKon reminded us why we love Kennywood. On a hot summer day which would exhaust any park patron (some even considered asking Idlewild to bring the dunk tank from the previous day's event), ACEers enjoyed the little things that make Kennywood so special; whether that's having gentle conversation on the patio of the Parkside Café, riding *Phantom's Revenge* for 30 minutes straight, or cramming a bunch of friends into Turtle and Kangaroo cars.

Remembering Dick Bowker

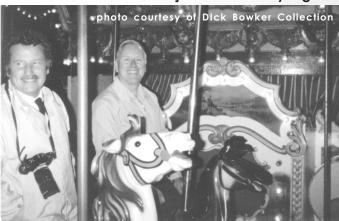
1929-2012

by Bill Linkenheimer III

to one of eternity.

On July 23, 2012, ACE lost a piece of its history when local member Richard "Dick" Bowker passed away at age 83. Dick attended Coaster Con I at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg and was card-carrying member #10. ACE Western Pennsylvania was proud to have him as a lifelong member of this region, as he spent his entire life living in Forest Hills, just outside of Pittsburgh.

Dick was a roller coaster enthusiast and he loved World's Fairs, but above both of these, the trolley was his greatest passion. More impressive than being the tenth member of ACE was being the seventh member of the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum. What began as the Pittsburgh Electric Railways Group, who met to ride and discuss trollevs, grew into the nowthriving Pennsylvania Trolley Museum in Washington,



Charlie Jacques and Dick Bowker on the Hersheypark Carousel likely taken in the very early 1980s.

Pennsylvania. So great was Dick's support for the organization that in 1961 he purchased Pittsburgh Railways streamlined PCC streetcar #1138 for the museum. Now that's dedication!

His participation in ACE was substantial as well. In 2000, Kennywood awarded him with *The Golden Kenny*, the region's annual award celebrating the enthusiasm of its members.

As Dick didn't have any close living relatives, those in attendance at his funeral were mostly his friends from the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum and ACE. Considering the historical relationship between amusement parks and trolleys, these two interests were on parallel tracks, so to speak. His many friends exchanged stories of his vast collections of all things related to his hobbies, and in particular the thousands of postcards that he meticulously maintained.

Sarah Windisch recalled that Dick had an amazing collection of World's Fair items and he loved to talk about them. "I went to his house a number of years ago and was just blown away by his collection of amusement park, train, trolley, and other related items. "

The minister at the funeral wonderfully related how Dick's hobbies were such an important part of his life, mentioned that there wasn't a postcard of heaven, and used one of the world's most famous trolleys – that of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, which transitions between our world and the Neighborhood of Make Believe – to illustrate Dick's transition from our world

Bill Fronczek and Bruce Wells, two officials from the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, delivered a eulogy to remember Dick, and both seemed to reinforce a common theme, which is one that ACE members can and should take to heart. Dick was one of the first people whom each of these gentlemen met when they joined the trolley organization, and they viewed Dick

as being INCLUSIVE when it came to others who showed interest in his hobbies. He welcomed everyone to join in, learn, participate, and become a part of the hobby and organization, essentially serving as an ambassador for his passions. Mr. Wells fondly remembers being a young man and meeting with Dick to plan "fan trips" where they would charter a streetcar and have the trolley company operate it over a pre-determined

route and after the planning was done, would suggest that they all go to Kennywood!

Friends will remember Dick for many special things. Among them are the Christmas cards he sent out. Each year, a vintage photograph (from his collection) of a different trolley or trolley route was featured. Naturally, some years, the photograph included an amusement park at the end of a trolley line.

Dick was also a big fan of the long-defunct Rock Springs Park in Chester, West Virginia. Joe Comm, author of Images of America: Rock Springs Park, acknowledged that the book likely would not have been possible without the insight, knowledge, and postcards of Dick Bowker. In a letter to Sarah Windisch, Dick wrote of the park, "The Cyclone roller coaster was the best ride there. I also liked the Pretzel dark ride and [from] the Ferris wheel, you could see the Ohio River and East Liverpool [Ohio]. That park never did modernize after 1927-1928. It was closed for four years during WW2 but you could forget all your troubles and all the world's problems while there. I always liked the trolley loop and the rails were set into a yellow brick road. Even though the last trolley ran there in 1934, the loop lasted until 1970. Later photos show that they did cut the rail head off. So, on the upper level beyond the yellow brick road was my land of Oz."

Sarah Windisch perhaps summed it up best in saying, "I know many of us will miss Dick. He was a great man, a good friend, and a wonderful source of information and stories!"

The parks "up north" host CoasterFest

Two organizations, two parks, one great holiday weekend by Erik Frankenstein

On Memorial Day weekend, ACE Western Pennsylvania joined with Western New York Coaster Club (WYNCC) to converge on Conneaut Lake Park and Waldameer & Water World to celebrate WNYCC's 31st CoasterFest. There were 86 people in attendance from 12 different states to enjoy all that the parks had to offer.



Dan Swartz and Bill Galvin on Flying Scooters.

Saturday was at Conneaut Lake Park and we all got to enjoy several ITOTs (Informal Takeover Times, where we gather as a group to enjoy a ride together) on Conneaut's classic Carousel, Bumper Cars, and their recently refurbished Cascade Express miniature golf course. Later in the day, about 30 attendees enjoyed a leisurely cruise on The Kaylee Belle boat around Conneaut Lake. For dinner, we had a nice catered meal that included fried chicken, hot sausage. baked beans and a cookie tray for dessert. During the meal, Lenny Adams of Structural Technologies, Inc. and Adams Family Amusements, gave us an update of all the goings-on with Blue Streak and other rides, now that his company is operating all of the rides at the park this season. Also at the meal, there was a Chinese auction and a silent auction held to benefit Conneaut Lake Park. The auction items were mostly from the extensive collection of the late Nancy



Lenny Adams of Conneaut Lake Park gives a State of the Park Address.

Carrigan and were donated by her husband, Jerry. A total of \$1,140 was raised to help the park. After the meal there were two more ITOTs – one on Devil's Den and one on Flying Scooters. After the park closed, there was an abbreviated ERT on the famous *Blue Streak* and Tumble Bug, one of only two operating Traver bug rides in existence. Our ERT was cut short by a thunderstorm so Lenny was kind enough to reopen Devil's Den for riders to finish out the evening.



Amusement park memorabilia from the collection of Nancy Carrigan was put into gift baskets as part of a Chinese auction during the picnic.

Sunday at Waldameer started out bright and sunny until a pop-up thunderstorm put a damper on things for an hour or so. Once it cleared up, there were a few ITOTs that included Flying Swings and Thunder River log flume. We enjoyed a catered meal of barbeque chicken, hot dogs, burgers and other picnic favorites. After dinner, the rescheduled photo tour of Ravine Flyer II allowed participants a unique view of the coaster, and there were additional ITOTs on the L. Ruth Express train, Steel Dragon, and two of Bill Tracy's classic dark attractions: Pirate's Cove and Whacky Shack. At 10 p.m. we were treated to an awe-inspiring fireworks display that made the Presque Isle sky glow. Following the fireworks, there was a wonderful ERT on Ravine Flyer II and Comet.

Despite some bad weather, a good time was had by all. On a personal note, I would like to thank everybody who attended the event for supporting Conneaut Lake Park in their efforts to keep the park going for many years to come, and also to thank Conneaut Lake Park and Waldameer for hosting the weekend event.



Attendees walk outside of Waldameer for the Ravine Flyer II photo op

ACE Goes IdleWILD

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this wasn't enough already, the next surprise was a bit more appetizing – FREE continental breakfast! Plenty of doughnuts, Danish, coffee and juice were nicely laid out for everyone to enjoy while swapping stories with fellow family and friends.

As the morning progressed, ACEers enjoyed ERT on Rollo Coaster, Flying Aces and Carousel. Lee Ann Draud was in "ahh" of excitement with the 1932 PTC carousel, while Rick Barber and his daughter Anna, both from Monroe, North Carolina, thoroughly enjoyed Rollo Coaster as this was their first visit to Idlewild. Rick further commented on how Idlewild has "a very friendly staff." As the park opened to the general public, ERT began on two rides in the back of the park. As we made our way through Mister Rogers' Neighborhood of Make Believe, everyone participated in the "Castle Hug'n Song," including Nikki Blake and Joel Brewton. The Adult Hand Cars were also included in ERT, which Anna Barber found to be "fun and unique."



At noon, ACEers headed to Idlewild's awesome rustic pavilion area for some pre-lunch activities including basketball, horseshoes and volleyball, along with One Wild Auction. This ultimate silent auction of sorts included some artifacts, signs and ride parts from the region's parks including Idlewild, Conneaut Lake Park and Waldameer, and a lot from Kennywood, most of which were generously donated by Jason Belavic. As if the catered barbeque picnic wasn't great enough, Idlewild added another delicious surprise - an ice cream sundae bar! After the meal, ACE Western Pennsylvania regional representative Bill Linkenheimer III and Idlewild's Jeff Croushore welcomed everyone and noted that attendance was very strong with 116 present. Before Jeff ended his spiel to the crowd, he had just one more surprise for ACE – a ticket for a return trip to Idlewild during the 2012 season – for FREE! One Wild Auction was closed and later it was reported that a whopping \$1,040 was raised for ACE's Museum & Archives Fund.

Following the picnic, Jeff Croushore along with Adam Napotnik, Bill Linkenheimer III, and ACE president Dave Altman, each put their "good sport" hats on and took a turn at the Dunk Tank, which was a fundraiser for the ACE Preservation Fund. The four did a fine job antagonizing, as \$285 was raised. After the splashtacular, ACEers enjoyed some ITOTs (Informal Takeover Times) that were scheduled on Confusion Hill, Dizzy Lizzy's, Paul Bunyan's Loggin' Toboggan flume and Whip. After the park closed, nighttime ERT was held on Caterpillar and Rollo Coaster. As evident, everyone had a great time and Idlewild really went out of their way to make sure ACE and their guests had a memorable visit. Remember! Never miss another ACE Goes IdleWILD day, again!

Gary Baker Memorial Day

by Ryan Lucas

Over 30 ACE members spent a beautiful day at Lakemont Park for the third annual Gary Baker Memorial Day on Saturday, July 28. Gary enjoyed spending a day out at an amusement park and Lakemont was one of his favorites. He served as the national events director for six years in addition to serving as a regional rep for ACE Western Pennsylvania. The great folks at International Rides Management (IRM) provided a \$25 Sheetz gift card that was won by Mary Geist. The staff at Lakemont, especially assistant manager Chris Harpster, provided some terrific hospitality. The early arrivers started on the ACE Coaster Classic, Skyliner. The back seat of the wooden coaster is still providing some incredible airtime on the first drop. The ITOT

schedule continued withascenic Saturday stroll on the Tin Lizzies antique car ride. Many members proceeded to purchase a ride on the world's oldest



roller coaster, Leap the Dips. The ride that is rolling around in the second century of its existence is still a gem for all coaster enthusiasts. After all of the early riding, a stop at Lakemont's newest food installation was next. Bubba's BBQ Shack features some delicious pulled pork and barbecued chicken. After a group photo, many members decided to hit the links for one of Gary's favorite activities, miniature golf. The greens and nice weather allowed for some low scoring. After missing a few easy shots around the hole, no other activity can calm the nerves like a round of bumper cars, the next stop on the schedule. The Lakemont train provided some unexpected thrills as the day continued. A large load of ACE members were a little bit too much for the train to handle and a brief stop occurred near the middle of the ride. Everyone did remain seated and calm when the ride shortly resumed. Toboggan was ready for the brave members to challenge the vertical lift hill. A final spin on Skyliner was the perfect way to cap off a day honoring one of the hardest working members in ACE's history. This celebration of Gary's life continues to be a highlight of the regional calendar and is a great example of what ACE is really about.





KENNYWOOD

Friday, October 19, 2012 7 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Don't miss ACE Western Pennsylvania's 11th annual informal event at Kennywood's Phantom Fright Nights. Discount tickets are available in advance for \$24 each plus \$1 handling per order (any number of tickets). Checks are accepted from ACE members only, though you can purchase as many tickets as you like, including for non-member guests. Also, the tickets may be used any night that Kennywood is open for Phantom Fright Nights during 2012. Ticket orders must be RECEIVED by October 12 to allow sufficient time for the tickets to be sent via First Class mail. Along with your payment, clearly indicate how many tickets you are purchasing and to what address you want them sent. Also include an email address, so that a confirmation can be sent to you. MAKE YOUR CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO DAVE ALTMAN and mail to:

ACE/DAFE Phantom Fright Night C/O Bill Linkenheimer PO Box 15353 Pittsburgh, PA 15237-0553

A schedule of informal/optional meeting times at roller coasters and haunted attractions will be included with ticket orders, included on the event flier that can be found at ACEwesternPA.org, and also sent out via email. If you don't currently receive ACE Alert emails from ACE Western Pennsylvania, please send an email to eblast@ACEwesternPA. org and request to be added to the list. Refunds will not be issued for unused tickets.





7 p.m. - midnight
Discover "nine levels of fear" with your fellow
ACE members as ACE Western Pennsylvania
enjoys its first official yet informal event at

Ghost Lake, the Halloween event at Conneaut Lake Park, which truly takes things up a notch in terms of the fear factor. All guests of Ghost Lake visit the levels of fear in a designated order, so it lends itself to enjoying it as a group. The final level of fear is none other than the ACE Roller Coaster Landmark Blue Streak. Even though the park is open for five hours, ACE members and their guests who can arrive at the designated time will enjoy a discount and express entry. ACE members and their guests can meet up at the "Conneaut Lake Park" sign (close to the roadway and by the pond) at the front gate at 7:45 p.m. At 8 p.m., they'll be escorted into the park as a group and will enjoy a \$3 discount (including non-member guests). Complete details are included on the ACE Ghost Lake event flier that can be found at ACEwesternPA.org.

KENNYWOOD

Friday, December 7, 2012

5 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Enjoy Kennywood during the holidays with the park's second annual foray into December operation. Attendees last year were blown

away by the festive atmosphere and the park decorated with hundreds of thousands of holiday lights. There is no event registration and you can purchase tickets in advance at Kennywood.com or at the gate when you arrive at the park. Once there, we encourage you to meet up with your fellow members for ITOTs (Informal Takeover Times) of various rides and to enjoy the shows together. The schedule of ITOTs will be included on the ACE Holiday Magic event flier that can be found at ACEwesternPA.org, and also sent out via email. If you don't currently receive ACE Alert emails from ACE Western Pennsylvania, please send an email to eblast@ACEwesternPA.org and request to be added to the list.



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