



The Fun Times

The FUNOFFICIAL Newsletter of ACE Western Pennsylvania

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photo by Joel Brewton

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with lots of activities and surprises

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Tony Colega played an extra in the recently released movie, "The Fault In Our Stars" and can be seen in the Amsterdam restaurant scene in the right rear corner of the restaurant . . . **Harry and Yvonne Sykes** just celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary . . . **Kenny Kangaroo** celebrated his 40th birthday this summer . . . congratulations to **Ron Gaston** who purchased a new home and completed the move this summer . . . congratulations to **Evan Smith** who just began his college career at the University of Akron . . . congratulations to **Dan Jones** and **Alexa Lovas**, who were married in August, with **Corey Maley** serving as best man . . .

*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***



By Tim Michalak

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself: my name is Tim Michalak and I am one of the ACE Western Pennsylvania Assistant Regional Representatives. If you have visited ACEwesternPA.org you have seen my work, and if you are subscribed to the ACE Western PA e-Blast then you receive an occasional email from me. If you have attended CoasterBash! in the past three years I was responsible for setting up and running the A/V Equipment for the event.

For those of you that may not know, I currently work at Kennywood Park in the ride maintenance department. I have been working at the park for 13 years, where I have worked as a ride operator, in the park's communication center and with the electric department. I have done a lot of work converting the park over to Phantom Fright Nights mode and more recently Holiday Lights mode.

Many of you may also have seen me managing the Haunted Ark for Phantom Fright Nights. It was while working at the park my second season that I met the late Gary Baker asking trivia questions on the platform of *Thunderbolt*. I became good friends with Gary and he introduced me to ACE. It was through ACE that I made many new friends and had the chance to travel to many new parks and ride many new coasters.

Just over a year ago I was asked to join the ACE Western Pennsylvania Regional Rep team, and I am looking forward to helping plan events, helping our region grow and continuing to work on the regional website. I look forward to seeing everyone at this fall's events and at Kennywood!

KennyKon XXV

By Brenton Asti

More than 200 ACEers from all over the country, including from as far away as Arizona and California, gathered at Kennywood on July 27 for a day of fun and surprises. This was a special year, as KennyKon celebrated its 25th occurrence. To help kick off the celebration, Kennywood gave each attendee a customized, complimentary coffee mug that featured the KennyKon XXV logo. This logo (designed by regional Graphic Design Coordinator Mike Matscherz) was the same as that on the KennyKon XXV commemorative T-shirts. As ACEers picked up their registration packets and other memorabilia during the early morning hours, Ice Cream for Breakfast was available for purchase, complete with various cereals as toppings. All proceeds benefited Give Kids the World, a nonprofit resort village in central Florida that hosts families with children who have life-threatening illnesses while they visit the area's theme parks. This was the third year that Kennywood donated the ice cream, and local ACE members, including Assistant Regional Rep Ryan Lucas, served up an early treat for all who wanted ice cream before morning ERT.

As ACEers made their way through the legendary tunnel and onto the midways, three renowned wooden coasters, *Jack Rabbit*, *Racer* and *Thunderbolt*, were clicking and clacking for morning ERT. Although all three are favorites among ACEers, *Thunderbolt* received additional applause and cheers this year. Originally opened as *The Pippin* in 1924, the 46-year-old *Thunderbolt* was designated as an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark, joining *Jack Rabbit* and *Racer*, both of which received the designation in 2010 during Coaster Con XXXIII. It is important to note that Kennywood is the only park on the planet that is home to three ACE Roller Coaster Landmarks. During the dedication ceremony, several key representatives from Kennywood were on hand to help celebrate, including General Manager Jerome Gibas, Operations Manager Marie Ruby, Maintenance Manager Bryan Bartley, Assistant Maintenance Manager Geno Chamboredon and the long-time maintenance foreman for *Thunderbolt*, Keith Kuzma. Each of these Kennywood representatives has worked at the park for more than 25 years and has helped to ensure continuous preservation and operation of *Thunderbolt*, along with the two other woodies. Immediately following the ceremony, everyone gathered in front of the iconic *Thunderbolt* sign for a group photo.

Throughout the day, attendees gathered for ITOTs (Informal Takeover Times) on *Bayern Kurve*, *The Exterminator* and *Whip*, among other rides. For those who wanted a challenge, ACE Western Pennsylvania presented the KennyKon XXV Midway Games Challenge, during which players tackled 10 different midway games throughout the park, earning "Points Coupons." Although similar to

Coaster Con's annual Midway Olympics, the Midway Games Challenge allowed players to compete throughout the afternoon at their leisure — and as individuals, not as part of teams. This contest turned out to be extremely popular for attendees, and special thanks go to Assistant Regional Rep Tim Michalak, managing editor of *The Fun Times*, Brett Weissbart, Kennywood Public Relations Manager Jeff Filicko and the Kennywood games department managers and team members for making it a huge success!

Another highlight for attendees was the opportunity to tour Kennywood's recently acquired "railroad property." Kennywood once again went above and beyond by

providing transportation on the Kennywood Trolley, which departed the park every 20 minutes during the afternoon to shuttle ACEers down the hill. Attendees were able to tour several buildings, which are primarily used for storage. Shells of retired *Phantom's Revenge* cars, *Phantom Fright Night* props and *Holiday Lights* displays were among the buildings' contents.

As the day progressed, the weather was not kind, and unfortunately the park decided to close early for the evening. Although the park closed to the public at 5:45 p.m., ACEers still got to enjoy a delicious picnic dinner and a special appearance from

artist Linda Barnicott, who revealed her newest Kennywood piece, "Show Time by Kennywood's Paratrooper." Linda has been creating scenes of Kennywood since 1995, when her first print, "Ride with Me on the Carousel," was released. Also during dinner, Kennywood's director of community relations, Andy Quinn, was surprised when ACE President Dave Altman presented him with a plaque as ACE's newest Honorary Member. Andy Quinn has been instrumental to KennyKon since it started in 1989, and the plaque detailed his career and affiliation with ACE. A live auction of a *Phantom's Revenge's* retired car body turned into a bidding war between Aaron Maricic and Ken Riling, both well-known Kennywood supporters. When bidding hit \$1,500, the park surprised everyone by donating a second car, so they could both purchase one. By the time the dinner festivities wrapped up, the weather had cleared, and attendees cheered appreciatively when they learned that the park kept enough of its staff onsite so that the last ride on *Thunderbolt* and ERT on *Phantom's Revenge* could still take place. As yet another generous gesture, the park handed out complimentary rain check tickets (valid for the remainder of the season) to all non-season pass holders who paid for the day's admission. Although the evening was cut a little short because of the weather, everyone still had a lot of fun during this celebratory regional event, which is the longest-running regional event in ACE. Special thanks to the entire staff of Kennywood and to all the volunteers for making this another successful event!



photo by Joel Brewton

KennyKon XXV guests tour one of the "railroad property" buildings during the event, retired *Phantom's Revenge* cars are seen as well as the Old Kennywood Railroad diorama.

Thunderbolt Named ACE Roller Coaster Landmark

The following is the text of Thunderbolt's ACE Roller Coaster Landmark plaque:

American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) recognizes Kennywood's *Thunderbolt* as an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark, a designation reserved for rides of historic significance

Originally built as *The Pippin* in 1924 by renowned coaster designer John A. Miller (1872-1941) and constructed by Kennywood's Charles J. Mach, it was the park's second under-friction coaster designed by Miller and his fifth overall for Kennywood. *The Pippin* was famous for a large double-dip into a natural ravine as well as saving its largest drop of 95 feet for last.

In 1967, Kennywood Entertainment president Carl E. Henninger (1908-1985) and park manager Carl O. Hughes (1921-2012) took a considerable gamble when they decided to tear down portions of *The Pippin* to enlarge it and create a different roller coaster experience. The ride's loading platform, upper turn and double-dip were removed. Kennywood's head of maintenance, Andrew Vettel (1914-1988), designed and supervised the construction of the thrilling new layout. The lift hill was lengthened to a new height of 70 feet, while the overall track length was extended to 2,887 feet that included a series of tightly banked turns and drops along the midway. A new loading station built within the redesigned structure was constructed to allow for a large 50-foot drop to occur as soon as the train left the platform. The ride's unique midcourse lift hill and its thrilling final drop were retained along with three National Amusement Device (NAD) Century Flyer trains that had been acquired for *The Pippin* in 1958. The ride was then renamed *Thunderbolt* via a naming contest, with the opening on April 14, 1968.

ACE commends Kennywood for continuing to operate and preserve *Thunderbolt*, a unique and historic wooden roller coaster.

Presented by American Coaster Enthusiasts
July 27, 2014

The King of Coasters

Written to commemorate *Thunderbolt's* dedication as an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark

The *King of Coasters* holds its title true.
Haphazard is the depth-defying dive
Encroaching on a hillside. You've arrived
To face a storm before the calm ensues.
Heroic hearts of giants hewn in two
Ubiquitously join again in stride.

No one's too young, and none too old to ride
Desire's diamond chariots anew.

Encompassing the grounds, we harrow through,
Recoiling 'round the helix yet again.
Before we plummet down the valley walls,
Oh let us touch the tassels of the wind.
Look out below! And in a flash, we fall –
The *King of Coasters* holds its title true.

-Jonathan Sima

Jonathan Sima is a Food & Beverage Team Member at Kennywood and this poem was first published in "Kenny Tales," the park's staff newsletter, which identified him as a Team Member who truly cares about the park and its attractions. We couldn't agree more!

Kennywood's Andy Quinn Named ACE Honorary Member During KennyKon XXV

Although KennyKon XXV got cut a little short because of the weather, it turned out to be a very memorable day for attendees regardless. Not only was the legendary *Thunderbolt* dedicated as an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark, but during dinner another Kennywood "legend" was honored: Andy Quinn was made an Honorary Member of ACE. Andy's great-grandfather, Andrew McSwigan, along with F.W. Henninger, purchased Kennywood in 1906, and the two families proceeded to shape Kennywood into the wonderful traditional amusement park that has entertained millions.

Andy began working at the park in 1972 and has held many positions there over the years. He began his career as a parking lot attendant and later moved on to ride attendant, working on the Turnpike and Old Mill in his early years at the park. He then transferred to food service, becoming manager of the park's cafeteria. It was here that Andy first encountered members of ACE, when Coaster Con III was held at Kennywood in 1980. The second floor of the cafeteria would become home to presentations and displays featured during that convention, helping to make Andy part of those formative years of ACE. Andy eventually moved on to group sales and was also named director of community relations for the park. He has been involved with all of the subsequent national ACE events at Kennywood, including the ACE Summer Conference in 1986, Coaster Con XIV in 1991, Coaster Con XXI in 1998 and, most recently, Coaster Con XXXIII in 2010. It was during Coaster Con XXXIII that Andy gave one of the funniest and most memorable keynote speeches in the club's history. More important, Andy has helped to make KennyKon, ACE's longest-running regional annual event, such an overwhelming success over the years.

Although the McSwigan and Henninger families sold the park in 2008, Andy still remains in his positions, continuing to help keep Kennywood's legacy thriving for future generations.

It is with great pleasure and appreciation that ACE welcomes Andy Quinn as an honorary member of ACE.

-Dave Hahner

Allegheny Mountain Madness 2014

By Lee Ann Draud

Allegheny Mountain Madness in 2010 was a lead-in to an awesome Coaster Con at four western Pennsylvania parks — a hard act to follow. This year's event was the first in a fun-filled weekend that included Lakemont Park & the Island Waterpark and DelGrosso's Amusement Park on Saturday, followed by a much-anticipated KennyKon on Sunday. Coinciding with Allegheny Mountain Madness this year was Gary Baker Memorial Day, which occurs the Saturday closest to Gary's birthday in July and honors the late ACE Western Pennsylvania regional rep and ACE events director. Gary was a former (occasional) employee at Lakemont and, in addition to being a supporter of small parks, worked hard on the fundraising campaign to restore *Leap the Dips*.

Bright sun welcomed the 115 attendees at Lakemont in Altoona, the first park on the day's agenda. Attendees could visit each park as they wished, but morning and early afternoon events were scheduled at Lakemont. The morning began with ERT on *Leap the Dips* and *Skyliner*, with many heading to *Skyliner* first. Although no one wanted to miss a ride on *Leap the Dips*, the line can grow quickly (and move slowly) for the oldest roller coaster in the world.

After the official park opening and a group photo at 11 a.m., attendees were free to re-ride the coasters and line up for other popular Lakemont rides, such as the *Chance Toboggan*, bumper cars, go karts, train, Octopus and swings. Noon marked the start of the barbeque picnic lunch, where everyone had time to relax, catch up and decide whether to enter the Gary Baker Memorial Miniature Golf Tournament. In addition to his coaster and amusement park interests, Gary was a miniature golf pro and loved to play. Altoona was a center of railroading in the 19th and 20th centuries, so it's appropriate that Lakemont's course has a railroad theme, with some challenging holes. After the last ball fell into the 18th hole and assistant regional rep Ryan Lucas added up the totals, Kevin Leader was declared the winner, followed by Kevin May and Harry Sykes, who tied for second.

Most attendees then left Lakemont and drove the short distance up the road to DelGrosso's in Tipton. Known as Bland's Park until it was purchased by Fred DelGrosso in 1947, and is now both a successful family-run amusement park and a purveyor of fine pasta and pizza sauces plus Murf's Famous Potato Salad. It being a hot day, the waterpark was a popular destination for some, but others headed directly to the rides. Coaster enthusiasts love the Reverchon *Crazy Mouse*, but also popular were the X-Scream Tower, Yo-Yo, Casino, Dodgems, Pharaoh's Fury, train and the beautiful Herschell-Spillman Carouselle, which is the only ride in the park today that was also on site in 1947. Those who couldn't wait for the scheduled dinner headed to Murf's Kitchen for a snack or the Tipton Creek Dairy

for hand-dipped ice cream in some hard-to-find flavors.

After welcoming everyone at the 6 p.m. spaghetti dinner, Regional Representative Bill Linkenheimer III commented, "This is probably the only place you'll get spaghetti and potato salad at the same meal." (And indeed, why come to DelGrosso's if you're not going to try both the spaghetti sauce made in the plant right across the road and Murf's potato salad?) Bill reviewed the upcoming ACE Western Pennsylvania events: KennyKon the following day; an event-filled October weekend that will include ACE Ghost Lake at Conneaut Lake Park; ACE Phantom Fright Night at Kennywood; and ACE HalloBoo! at Idlewild in Ligonier.

This fright-filled weekend is not to be missed!

Door prizes were announced, and Bill relayed best wishes from DelGrosso's general manager, Carl Crider, who was unable to attend the dinner. He also thanked Lakemont Park for being co-host of Allegheny Mountain Madness and closed with "See you at KennyKon tomorrow!" Attendees were then free to enjoy DelGrosso's at dusk, with its rides outlined in beautiful colored lights and its gift shop welcoming everyone who wanted to check out DelGrosso's famous sauces. Thanks to the staff at Lakemont and DelGrosso's and to all the ACE Western Pennsylvania volunteers for an exciting day of madness in the Allegheny Mountains.



photo by Joel Brewton

Mike Homza at the Gary Baker Memorial Miniature Golf Tournament at Lakemont Park.

ACE - DAFE Phantom Fright Night

Kennywood
Saturday, October 18, 2014
6:30 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.

ACE Western Pennsylvania and Darkride And Funhouse Enthusiasts present the 13th annual informal event at Kennywood's Phantom Fright Nights, and this year with some perks that include early admission, a lights-on tour of two of two haunts, first-in-line access to one of the most popular haunts, and the chance for some attendees to experience Ark in the Dark, a new after-midnight up-charge attraction, that will be complimentary for some lucky ACEers. Ark in the Dark has daring guests finding their way through an entirely dark (except for the stairs) Noah's Ark that is filled with live actors. Note that those wishing to enjoy the special privileges will need to arrive at the park gate in advance of 6:30 p.m. The schedule of activities is as follows:

6 - 8 p.m.	Discounted tickets on sale at Group Sales Office
6:30 p.m.	Enter park at main gate
6:35 p.m.	Lights-on tour of Mortem Manor
6:50 p.m.	First in line for Mortem Manor
7 p.m.	Park opens to the public
7:20 p.m.	Lights-on tour of Voodoo Bayou
12 midnight	Ark in the Dark (participation may be limited)

There will be a complete schedule of ITOTs (Informal TakeOver Times) planned between 7:45 p.m. and midnight. The park closes at 1 a.m.

ACE and DAFE members may purchase discounted tickets on the night of the event in the Group Sales Office at the park's main entrance, between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Discounted tickets are \$27 (regularly \$33.99). Members must present a valid ACE or DAFE membership card, but may purchase tickets for guests as well. Discounted ticket sales end at 8 p.m. ELIGIBLE season passholders (The Phantom's Fright Pass and 2014/15 Premium Season Pass) may use their season pass to enter the park.



Kennywood
Saturday, November 29, 2014

ACE members will once again be able to enjoy Kennywood during the holidays with this special informal event during the park's fourth annual

Holiday Lights. Please keep an eye on ACEwesternPA.org and ACE Western Pennsylvania's Facebook for more information that will be available soon!



CONNEAUT LAKE PARK
Friday, October 17, 2014
7 p.m. - midnight

ACE and DAFE invite you to experience the 13 "levels of fear" that Ghost Lake has become known for. With the look of Conneaut Lake Park in the dark already a bit creepy, this event definitely takes the scare factor up a notch. All guests of Ghost Lake visit the levels of fear in a designated order, lending itself to being enjoyed as a group. The final level of fear is none other than the ACE Roller Coaster Landmark Blue Streak in the dark. ACE and DAFE members (and their guests) who arrive by 7:15 p.m. (meeting at the Conneaut Lake Park sign close to the roadway and by the pond) will enjoy express entry and a \$5 discount (\$20 after discount; cash only) as they're escorted into the park as a group at 7:30 p.m. Please see the event flier at ACEwesternPA.org for complete details.



IDLEWILD
Sunday, October 19, 2014

Join ACE Western Pennsylvania and DAFE for the region's first informal event to experience Idlewild's celebrated family-oriented HallowBoo! Members of either organization can present their valid membership card at the gate for an \$8 savings on the day of the event. With the exception of Wild Mouse, most rides are operating and can be enjoyed with the park all decked out for Halloween. A complete schedule of ITOTs (Informal TakeOver Times) are listed on the event flier, which will be available at ACEwesternPA.org.

**Bonus
Haunt!**

CASTLE BLOOD
Sunday, October 19, 2014
7 - 9 p.m.

Don't let the frightful weekend end! ACE and DAFE members can show their membership card to receive a discount at Castle Blood, one of Pennsylvania's most unusual haunted attractions, which is located in Monessen. See the bottom of the ACEHallowBoo! event flier for more details!

Visit ACEwesternPA.org for updated information on all regional events.



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