



# The Fun Times

The FUNOFFICIAL Newsletter of ACE Western Pennsylvania

## "Mr Twister's" spin on



by John "Mr. Twister" Gasper

CoasterBash! speakers and presentations officially began at 4 p.m., but I, like others, I usually tend to crash the gates when they open at 2 p.m. There are several reasons for this behavior which include getting a good seat, having time to check out the vendors and overflowing door prize tables, buying raffle tickets and surveying the silent auction items. But as you know, the biggest reason is, that the best coasters in the world always take a back seat (no pun intended) to the friends you anxiously await seeing at ACE events!

This year was no exception. Once attendees cleared the rigorous screening and interrogation process (i.e. registration) of Ron Mazur and Edmund Gaskill they were able to enter the hall and begin socializing. The two hours of fun and frivolity however, disappeared very quickly and it was time to get our glasses filled with pop, open our bags of snacks and settle in for the first round.

The first presentation was a video flashback of the 2011 season by Joel Brewton. Some of the highlights included a young ACE member driving the wrong way on Conneaut's bumper cars (I won't mention any names but it looked like he was "chase-ing" someone) and a very competitive race down the Fun Slide which included false starts, illegal use of hands, illegal contact and a smashing finish! Other events covered were a visit inside ACE Memorial Park at Waldameer, KennyKon XXII, last rides on the Pitt Fall, Jeff Filicko riding with his hands up, ACE Phantom Fright Night and ACE Holiday Magic.

Next up was one of ACE's most well traveled members, Ken Simmons, and his video of the new

coasters of 2011. The highlights here included Quassy's *Wooden Warrior*, Bay Beach's reincarnated *Zippin Pippin*, and *Green Lantern: First Flight*, the first Zacspin coaster in the U.S., which is located at Six Flags Magic Mountain

Bill Linkenheimer III, our regional rep, then introduced and acknowledged those who helped put this event together as well as ACE officers and volunteers.

Steve Gorman, the first speaker of the day, talked about several things going on at Waldameer for the coming season. *Comet* will be getting its brakes changed from good old sleds to modern magnetic brakes. While we purists might normally boo-hoo this move, we will surely appreciate the time saved waiting in line since the *Comet* can now run a two-train operation. Speaking of two-train operation, the L. Ruth Express train ride will now double its



photo by Joel Styer

Jack Moyers and Lisa Rawson from Conneaut Lake and Lenny Adams of STI

capacity by adding a second train as well. (No word yet on whether the rumors are true that it might be a high speed bullet). Waldameer is going cashless...at least once you pass the ticket booths. All other areas of the park will only take credit and debit cards, as well as in-house Wally Cards. The best news by far from Steve was that the expansion in the North End of the park will now be able to take place a lot more smoothly due to the fact that local officials are backing the plan and helping out. (Can you say *Ravine Flyer* IV, V, VI VII?)

I may have been the only person disappointed in the next presentation...or at least in the method of media used. I have, for many years, both at ACE

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# ON TRACK

with the editor

Hello and welcome to the summer issue of *The Fun Times*. Hurray!!!! It's coaster season once again and this year is shaping up to be another great year. While there are no new coasters this year, there are many changes and additions at our regional parks. There are also some exciting events coming up this year for our region. See you in the queues!

*Matt*

## THE QUEUE LINE

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

Andrew Duch..... Gibsonia, PA  
Mike Leneweaver..... Pittsburgh, PA  
Randall Recker..... Pittsburgh, PA  
Angela, Faith, Heather & Robert Sekerak Jr..... Nanty Glo, PA  
Brett Weissbart..... Valencia, PA

## REPORTERS WANTED!

If you'll be attending any of this summer's regional ACE events: ACE Goes IdleWILD II, KennyKon XXIII, or Gary Baker Memorial Day at Lakemont Park and you'd be willing to share your experience by covering it with an article for *The Fun Times*, let us know. Whether you are a new or veteran member, we're always interested in having the newsletter offer fresh perspectives. And if you're concerned about your spelling and grammar, we're not – that's what editors are for. If you're willing to pitch in and contribute to YOUR newsletter, drop us a line at [newsletter@ACEwesternPA.org](mailto:newsletter@ACEwesternPA.org).



Condolences to **Mary Geist** and her husband, **Mike Homza**, on the recent passing of Mary's mother, **Mary Lou Geist** she was also the mother of late ACE member **Augie Geist** . . . get well wishes to **Jim Futrell** who recently had surgery on his left foot . . . congratulations to **Jimmy Futrell** on his new job at Kennywood in the rides department . . . **David Hahner III** received the Coach's Choice award for his perseverance and steady skill improvement in the sport of cross country at Assumption School, where he's graduating from 8th grade. He'll be attending North Hills High School in the fall . . . **Terry Hahner** celebrated her 50th birthday over Memorial Day weekend . . . condolences to **Dave Hahner** and his family at the loss of Dave's 95 year old grandmother, **Cecelia Hahner** . . . congratulations to **Christian Bruggeman** who graduated from Carnegie Mellon University and has been accepted into graduate school there, where he'll get a Masters of Entertainment Technology . . . congratulations to **Nikki Blake** who will spend her first college summer with a summer job at Chipotle . . . **Vic Kleman** will be turning 80 years old this August and we're thinking that could mean another long day with Kennywood's *Jack Rabbit* . . . congratulations to **Joel Brewton**, who graduated from Point Park University with a degree in photo journalism and is now working as a staff photographer for the *Uniontown Herald Standard* . . . congratulations to **Linda Spar's** son, **Jason Spar**, who graduated from the Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering at Arizona State University . . . Kudos to everyone who participated in the Conneaut cleanup weekend . . . congratulations to **Angie Fuoco**, who won a free CoasterFest (Conneaut Lake Park and Waldameer) registration compliments of International Rides Management (IRM), after entering an email contest held by ACE Western Pennsylvania . . . Ponies aren't just for kids at Conneaut! During CoasterFest, **Christian Bruggeman**, **Cequenda Bruggeman**, **Lee Ann Draud**, **Elena Marziale** and **Steve Marziale** each had a pony ride . . .

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](mailto:Chatter@ACEwesternPA.org)



photo courtesy of Fun Fore All

## New Ride at Fun Fore All

The new addition this year at the Cranberry Township park is a Happy Swing from Zamperla. It is a simple swing ride that can be enjoyed by both children and their parents. The helicopter ride was removed.

*Editor's Note: Waldameer has also purchased a Happy Swing ride for 2012.*



# SMALL TALK WITH THE KOASTER KIDS

compiled by Maggie Altman



Kristofer Robinson

**Age:** 14

**Joined ACE:** October 31, 2010

**First ACE event:** KennyKon 2011

**First coaster ride:** *The Big Bad Wolf*

**First amusement park:** Busch Gardens, Williamsburg

**Total coaster count:** 91 (if you don't count Dudley Do Right's Ripsaw Falls)

**Favorite steel coaster:** *Superman Ride of Steel* (before *Bizarro*) at Six Flags New England, *Montu* (can't decide)

**Favorite wood coaster:** *El Toro*, *BoulderDash* (can't decide)

**Favorite non-coaster ride:** drop towers, water slides

**Favorite coaster experience:** When I first went to Waldameer and was riding the *Ravine Flyer II* for the first time. Seeing the breathtaking view of Lake Erie and Presque Isle at the top of the lift followed by a great ride led to an unforgettable experience!

**Comment:** Even though I've been in ACE for only a little over a year, my love for coasters goes back very far. Hopefully it will go much longer too!

If you are 16 years old or younger and would like to be profiled in an upcoming issue of the Fun Times, please contact me at [KoasterKids@ACEWesternPA.org](mailto:KoasterKids@ACEWesternPA.org) or by phone at 724-325-4491. I will send you a short questionnaire to be returned with a photo to accompany the article. The photo will be returned upon request.

## REP RAP

by Dave Altman



Maggie and I were discussing recent communications and technology phenomena such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace (RIP), texting, QR codes and instant messaging.

When we joined ACE in 1985, all communication was by phone or in person as the Internet was in its infancy and mobile phones were somewhat expensive and bulky. Email has gradually become the dominant form of communication for the Executive Committee and I can't imagine how the EC could conduct business using only phones and mailed letters for contact.

While we were pondering over what I could write about for this column, we received word that Norb Podemski of Wisconsin had recently passed away. Mike Thompson, editor of ACE News remarked that we would probably have five member obituaries in the upcoming issue. I am sure we all know of fellow members, such as past Western Pennsylvania regional reps Gary Baker and Jack York, who have left us too early. ACE remembers our departed friends each year in a memorial presentation during the annual convention banquet.

I think most longtime members would agree with the statement that they originally joined ACE for the coasters, but have stayed members due to the many lasting friendships they made in this organization. Where else could you share your passion for riding coasters with other like-minded people that you truly enjoy being around? I have noticed that sometimes there are more members "bench riding" during ERT sessions than actually on the coasters. Some of this may be due to physical limitations but much of it is just catching up with friends which they haven't seen for awhile. Ask anyone who has participated in one of ACE's foreign trips to relate the many shared experiences which made these trips so memorable.

Which leads me to my point – long before Facebook and Twitter, the original social networking was human interaction, the kind that occurs while attending an event. So get out there and attend an event, renew old friendships and make some new ones.

## "Mr. Twister's" Spin on CoasterBash! XXIII

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events and NAPHA events, thoroughly enjoyed the traditional slide presentations (complete with Kodak slide projector) given by NAPHA Historian Jim Futrell. I was sad to see that Jim had updated and was using PowerPoint. However, Jim's "Top Ten Moments That Shaped the Amusement Industry," was anything but disappointing. The list included SeaWorld, the *Switchback Railway*, Disney's *Matterhorn Bobsleds*, Rye Playland, the Columbian Expo, Six Flags Over Texas, Luna Park, Arrow, under wheels on roller coasters and topped out with the opening of Disneyland. (I'm happy to say that I had at least five of these on the list that I quickly jotted down.) It was also announced that Jim is writing a book on Waldameer due for publication in 2013.

Jack Moyers and Lisa Rawson from Conneaut Lake Park, along with Lenny Adams from Structural Technologies, Inc. (STI), the firm responsible for the restoration of *Blue Streak*, were all on hand. The trio gave a State of the Park address and thanked all from ACE who have helped to support the park.

The Mini Golf course was resurfaced last summer and a refurbished band organ at the carousel debuted as well. Their biggest news is that Conneaut Lake Park is eligible for the National Historic Status (note: that doesn't make it a landmark – just eligible to be considered) and as a result, they can now apply for a \$25,000 Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission grant for *Blue Streak*. Continued good luck and success!

This year's version of, "You're going too fast and I can't think that quickly!" otherwise known as the CoasterBash! contest, was presented by Tim Michalak. The questions were related to people and places from the region, the answers of which were all published in the regional newsletter or regional website over the past year. (I only managed to get 9 out of 21 correct this time.)

Finally it was dinnertime and the voice of Roseanne Nyczaj, the most cheered and booed person at the event depending on when she called your table to get in line for what was, as always, a delicious buffet. During dinner, a video from Holiday World featuring Dan Koch showing some off-season track work on the popular *Voyage* roller coaster was played.

Often after a nice big meal folks are ready to get settled in for a nap. There was no chance of that happening here however, because kicking off the second half of presentations was Kennywood's Jeff Filicko. Jeff showed many detailed photos of the dismantling of Pitt Fall and construction work of the new ride replacing it.

Black Widow is a giant spinning, swinging, disc that will spin its web out over the Phantom's track to one side and well out over the midway on the other.

In fact, one of the concrete footings is in the middle of the midway and patrons will be able to walk under one of the supports. Luckily for the park, the winter in Pittsburgh was extremely mild, since what appeared to be 80% of the work was digging layers and layers of earth and rock in order to place the ride's footings deep into the ground.

Jeff continued with coverage of Kennywood's first-ever winter event, Holiday Lights, with many photos of the magnificent light displays. One part of Holiday Lights that will probably not return in 2012 is the flaming marshmallow toss!

photo by Joel Styer



Mary Ann Jaram, Ron Mazur, Marty Moltz, Joel Brewton, David Hahner III and Erik Frankenstein with Kennywood's Jeff Filicko

As his farewell treat, Filicko hosted a particularly funny version of "America's Fastest Growing Quiz Sensation," which for some reason, had Jeffrey Siebert as the answer to most of the questions. Before getting away too quickly though, Jeff was joined by Kenny Kangaroo for the presentation of The Golden Kenny. This award, honoring dedication and enthusiasm to the region, was presented to Tim Michalak, who just happened to be the event's volunteer A/V coordinator.



Jeff Filicko and Kenny Kangaroo presenting The Golden Kenny Award to Tim Michalak



Carole Sanderson spoke briefly on behalf of the National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives (NRCMA). She was hoping to show a video of *Big Bend*, an early Schwarzkopf ride that once operated at Six Flags Over Texas, but it turned out not to be available, allowing her to instead speak about and show some images of recent acquisitions and their facilities in Texas.

Next up was Pete Owens of Dollywood, one of the host parks for this year's national ACE convention. He showed video of their new-for-2012 winged coaster *Wild Eagle*, to whet our appetites. *Wild Eagle* will be the first of its kind to open in the U.S. He also gave us a tip on where to sit on the train for the wildest rides! (You should have been there.)



Pete Owens of Dollywood

The final park representative for this year's CoasterBash! was Jeff Croushore of Idlewild. He started with a recap of 2011 saying that their new Wowabunga wave pool met with "wave" reviews, and thanked ACE members for their support in helping the park collect the Golden Ticket Award for Best Kids Park, two years in a row. He then told us of many new things happening at Idlewild for the coming season. Duke the Dragon, Dutch Wonderland's mascot, will begin appearing with Ricky Raccoon. To complement the success of their "Meet the Super Heroes" event, guests will also have an opportunity to "Meet Fairy Tale Princesses." New this fall will be Idlewild's Family Oktoberfest taking place on two weekends in September. Finally, there will be a new show in the park entitled Thomas & Friends, featuring everyone's favorite talking train.

Continuing on, Jeff thanked ACE Historian Dave Hahner for his efforts in securing a state historical marker for Idlewild and bestowed him with a season pass as a token of thanks. He then reminded the audience that ACE Goes IdleWILD takes place on July 21, 2012. For

his send off, this Jeff chose "Are You Smarter Than A Fifth Grader" as his game of the year. Terry Hahner was pitted against a fifth grader (aka Jeff Filicko). And all I can make out in my notes about this is that it had something to do with a tulip-shaped arachnid that used centrifugal force to get to a 90- degree angle??



Jeff Croushore of Idlewild asking "5th grader" Jeff Filicko a question during his game show presentation

Facing the bewitching hour, Mike Matcherz had to load us into a bobsled and fly at record breaking speeds through his course of photos that took us from country to country and park to park highlighting ACE's 2011 trip to Scandinavia.

With Scandinavian ice shavings still flying in our faces, ACE president Dave Altman updated us on ACE's upcoming national events. After silent auction, Chinese auction and raffle prize winners were announced, a fond farewell was bid to all attendees. If you have not attended a CoasterBash! you are missing some interesting presentations and often hilarious antics. Most of all you're missing a chance to be with some great people. So if you missed it, consider coming out next year!

*If you want to take Mister Twister's advice, mark Saturday, March 2, 2013, on your calendar, as ACE Western Pennsylvania presents CoasterBash! XXIV.*

# CALENDAR OF REGIONAL EVENTS

**Saturday, July 21**  
**ACE Goes IdleWILD II**  
Idlewild and SplashZone  
Ligonier, PA

**Sunday, July 22**  
**KennyKon XXIII**  
Kennywood  
West Mifflin, PA

**Saturday, July 28**  
**Gary Baker Memorial Day**  
Lakemont Park  
Altoona, PA

**Saturday, March 2, 2013**  
**CoasterBash! XXIV**  
Salvatore's  
Pittsburgh, PA

Visit [ACEwesternPA.org](http://ACEwesternPA.org) for updated information on all regional events.

If you're not on ACE Western Pennsylvania's email list, send an email to [eblast@ACEwesternPA.org](mailto:eblast@ACEwesternPA.org) and request to be added to the list to be the first to find out about other upcoming events including ACE Fall Fantasy (August), ACE Phantom Fright Night (October) and ACE Holiday Magic (December).

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