



The Fun Times

The FUNOFFICIAL Newsletter of ACE Western Pennsylvania

Vol. 25, No. 2

June 2015

Vic's 95 Ride Marathon!

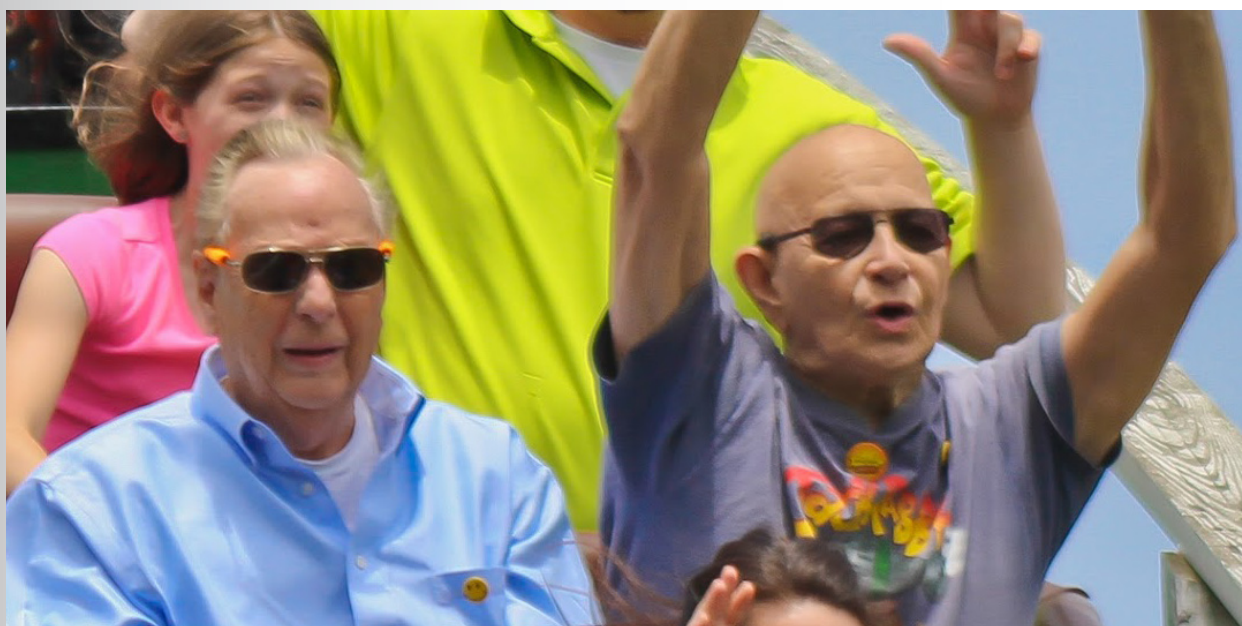


Photo by Joel Brewton



Photos by Sarah Windisch

On Sunday, May 24, Vic Kleman took 95 consecutive rides on Kennywood's *Jack Rabbit*, never leaving the train, as a way to celebrate the 95th year of the ACE Roller Coaster Landmark and ACE Coaster Classic. The 95th ride was also Vic's 5,000 lifetime ride! All three local television news stations and both major local newspapers were on hand, and the resulting stories made newswires and were picked up by newspapers, television stations, radio stations in at least 42 states throughout the country and beyond as well as over 200 news outlets (including majors such as Yahoo! News, CBS News and Fox News), including ones in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, New Zealand, and Malaysia, which dubbed Vic as "Lord of Spin" in their headline!



Condolences to **Bernie Cramer**, whose mother passed away last October . . . congratulations to **Adam Napotnik**, who graduated from Pine Richland High School in January . . . **Sarah Windisch** celebrated 20 years working for Highmark . . . condolences to **Karen DeMarino**, whose mother passed away in March . . . congratulations to **Jason** and **Shannon Eyer**, on the birth of their second daughter, **Peyton Avery Eyer**, on March 16 . . . congratulations to **Christian Bruggeman** who accepted a job at Google and relocated to San Francisco . . . congratulations to **Nikki Blake**, who graduated from Duquesne University . . . good vibes go out to **Erik Frankenstein**, whose mother is battling a serious health issue . . . congratulations to **Mike Funyak**, who graduated from Robert Morris University, and is spending the summer at Morey's Piers in a supervisory capacity . . . congratulations to **Steve Corbly** and **Karen DeMarino** on their engagement . . . congratulations to **RJ Ollio**, who graduated from the University of Pittsburgh last month . . . congratulations to **Garrett Sauers** who graduated from the Boyce Campus Middle College High School . . . congratulations to **Adam Carlini** who graduated from Clarion University . . . Thanks to **Sarah Windisch** for spending nine hours on Kennywood's *Jack Rabbit* platform, serving as the ride coordinator (and counter!) when **Vic Kleman** did his 95-ride marathon last month! . . .

Our Apologies

The last issue of The Fun Times pointed out several people connected to our region, who, through their volunteer efforts are making a difference in ACE at the national level. We regret that several persons/positions were inadvertently left off, so here they are: ACE Archives Committee: **Nikki Blake**, **Lee Ann Draud**, **Dave Hahner**; ACE Disciplinary Committee: **Debbie Sykes**; ACE News and RollerCoaster! Associate Editors: **Bill Linkeheimer III**, **Elaine Linkenheimer**; ACE Social Media Committee: **Christian Bruggeman**

THE FUN TIMES © 2015 is published every so often by and for the members of American Coaster Enthusiasts inhabiting the Western Pennsylvania region. Material may be used with or without permission -- we really don't care. 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.**

THE FUN TEAM

Matt Adler

Editor / Asst. Regional Representative

Bill Linkenheimer III

Senior Editor / Regional Representative

**Dave Altman, Dave Hahner,
Ryan Lucas, Stephen Gray**

Asst. Regional Representatives / Contributors

Tim Michalak

Webmaster/ Asst. Regional Representative

Brett Weissbart

The Fun Times Managing Editor

Mike Matscherz

Graphic Design Coordinator

CoasterBash! XXVI

by Sarah Windisch

ACE Western Pennsylvania's yearly non-riding event for 2015 was a great mix of near and far, old friends and new friends, laughter and maybe a few tears. The event kicked off with a video of Jeff Filicko, formerly of Kennywood but now working for Six Flags Fiesta Texas. With other thank-yous and goodbyes from Kennywood people, those who knew Jeff during his tenure will certainly miss him.

A video round up by Joel Brewton of the 2014 region's events including Allegheny Mountain Madness at Lakemont and Delgrosso's, KennyKon XXV at Kennywood, Flying High with a *Blue Streak* at Conneaut Lake Park and Waldameer, ACE Phantom Fright Night at Kennywood, ACE Ghost Lake at Conneaut Lake Park, and ACE Holiday Magic at Kennywood was next, followed by Jeff Filicko's humorous (thanks to another Jeff) and exciting announcement of Fiesta Texas' new ride for 2015, *Batman the Ride*.

After the very informative video by Ken Simmons of the new coasters for 2014 (which often brings cheers for the favorites), we were welcomed by Bill Linkenheimer III, our regional representative. After some announcements and thanks to the volunteers, reps and other ACE officials present, a video from Six Flags Great Adventure was shown and Coaster Con XXXVIII was discussed. The first presenter was Sam Shurgott from Morey's Piers, one of the host parks for Coaster Con. Sam showed some drawings of the new Kong-themed flying scooter ride for the Surfside Pier. Like many pier parks, Morey's has to think not in two, but three dimensions, so the rides are designed to make the most of their space; space beneath rides can be used for games, food stands, etc.

The contest this year was the "Fast Photo Contest." With 28 coasters all in western Pennsylvania shown, this doesn't sound difficult in theory; however, each was "enhanced" to make appear like a pencil sketch and therefore a little harder to make out all of the details. In the end there were three winners: Mike Matcherz had 25 correct, Dave Hahner had 27 correct and David Hahner scored a perfect 28. Great job guys!

Next up was Steve Gorman from Waldameer, who pointed out that in the past seven years the park has installed seven rides (*Ravine Flyer 2*, *Mega Vortex*, *Happy Swing*, *Music Express* and three *Zamperla* rides) and for 2015, visitors will see huge improvements to the waterpark. We saw some great photos of what a wave pool looks like under construction, lots of frozen gravel and how the park's new ticket booths will look. There will be a new bath house, Waveside grill, a sub shop, and drainage lines that will allow for the paving of the parking lot.

*"I always enjoy your event.
It's top drawer."*

-Steve Gorman

President, Waldameer & Water World

Sam Shurgott returned with some photos from a Route 66 road trip, as part of his side job with International Rides Management (IRM). We saw photos from parks and other attractions including Galveston Pleasure Rides, Kemah Boardwalk, Grand Texas Zuma Fun Center South Houston, Wet & Wild Splashtown, SeaWorld, Texas State Fair, Six Flags Over Texas, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor, Wonderland Park, Larson Manufacturing (including the NRCMA's storage facility),

CoasterBash! XXVI

Joyland (which is home to White Swan park's *Galaxi*), Frontier City, Baby Bells (which has the kiddie coaster from Fun Spot in Indiana, which was purchased by Sam and is on loan to Bell's).

Next was a new presenter, Mark Turner, from the Economic Progress Alliance of Crawford County (EPACC) to discuss Conneaut Lake Park, which is being managed by EPACC. He reviewed the revitalization of the park, the existing debt, deed restriction, hopes to sell surplus real estate, a recreation and entertainment facility and year round operation of the property, which is all part of a long term plan. Certainly changes will need to be made, but the amusement park is to remain.

Photo by Joel Brewton



After a wonderful dinner, Kennywood's Marie Ruby introduced us to the park's new Public Relations and Social Media Director, Nick Paradise. Nick is a Pittsburgh native, went to Penn State and previously worked in television. He's also married with two young sons. As for Kennywood, Noah's Ark won its fifth Golden Ticket Award (for Best Walk-Through attraction) and will celebrate by updating some scenes. Aero 360 is being re-lamped (that's 6,000 bulbs), the kiddie carousel is being repainted, and the "we can't tell you what it is, but we can tell you it's not the Simpsons" attraction new for 2015 will be in the old Playdium, with the queue located behind the building. The theme for 2015 is celebrating Kennywood Fanatics" with social media contests, videos online and sharing memories. New this year is an Oktoberfest event on September 26., Phantom Fright Nights begin October 2 featuring a new "ghost tour," and Holiday Lights will host the tallest Christmas tree in Pittsburgh. Of course, Kenny Kangaroo dropped by to help present The Golden Kenny award, which this year, went to Tina Napotnik-Sepcic and her son, Adam Napotnik. Congratulations Tina and Adam!

Up next to discuss their upcoming book were Jim Futrell and Dave Hahner. Both have previously published Arcadia books on their own and the new one is "Geauga Lake: the Funtime Years 1969 to 1995." Due out this summer, the book is available for pre-sale and we were treated to stories and many great photos from the Ohio amusement park. Many of us have fond memories from there and this book will be a great addition to our libraries.

Another speaker from Conneaut Lake Park was Lenny Adams, who is now the Director of Facilities at the park and will supervise its maintenance. His position now is to care for the rides, not the day-to-day management of the park, which frees him up and takes a lot of burden off his shoulders. He and his family are still living on property and will continue to do so. Lenny was adamant about his dedication to the park and his appreciation of his ACE friends and their support of Conneaut Lake Park. Lenny also discussed projects of Structural Technologies, Inc., his family's company that services wooden coasters throughout the country.



Photo by Joel Brewton

One of our most entertaining presenters was up: Idlewild's Jeff Croushore. Just to make sure we were all awake, he started with a few volunteers to don tiny sombreros and shake their maracas (of course Jeff had a full-size sombrero) and turned up the music and whipped the room into a frenzy, starting a conga line. Some of us were laughing too hard to dance but we were definitely paying attention once we all settled back down for his presentation. For 2015, Wild Mouse cars are getting new chassis and the giant "book" for Storybook Forest was getting a new vinyl front. We saw photos of Grigsby, a new puppet character in the park (visitors to Halloween last season may have spotted him), and the trolley ride being re-themed into "Daniel Tigers Neighborhood." The animatronics are being done by Life Formations and the set designs by the Weber Group. There will also be a new show, "Daniels Grrr-fic Day" with costumed characters, replacing the Thomas the Tank show that has been at the park for several seasons. We also saw a classic commercial from 1993 themed to "because you love to see them smile," focusing on the children having fun doing various things at Idlewild.

The last presenter was Philadelphia Toboggan Company (PTC) president and CEO Tom Rebbie, who may not have us in a conga line but is entertaining in a different way. With photos of the coaster trains from various parks that his company refurbished this past year, as well as photos around the shop (still no gift shop), you get an idea of how much room the trains take up and how many parts are involved. We also got an update on ACE, Tom's horse, who had to have a little "intervention" when he got out of his stall and into the feed bag and almost ate himself to death. Luckily, ACE got prompt medical attention and is doing just fine. We also saw some of Tom's non-coaster related photos which he titles "things I see" and he manages to take photos of for future laughter. Some are worth a giggle, some will put most people on the floor, even after seeing them a few times. Tom reminded us that if any ACE members are going to be near PTC on a weekday and would like a tour, please call him ahead of time to make sure he's going to be there.

The second annual CoasterBash! photo contest winners were announced. Third place went to Laura Ollio, second place to Michael Burkes, and first place to Joel Brewton. It was also announced the cool CoasterBash! XXVI souvenir wristbands that attendees received at registration were courtesy of Jason Ballard, the Photo Contest coordinator.. Winners for the raffle, Chinese Auction and silent auction were announced and the total money raised for ACE's special funds during CoasterBash! (including the Preservation Fund Sales Table) was \$2,229. Thank you to everyone who purchased and donated items, tickets and participated in the fundraisers! And thanks also to all of the presenters, organizers, and volunteers that helped make it a great CoasterBash!

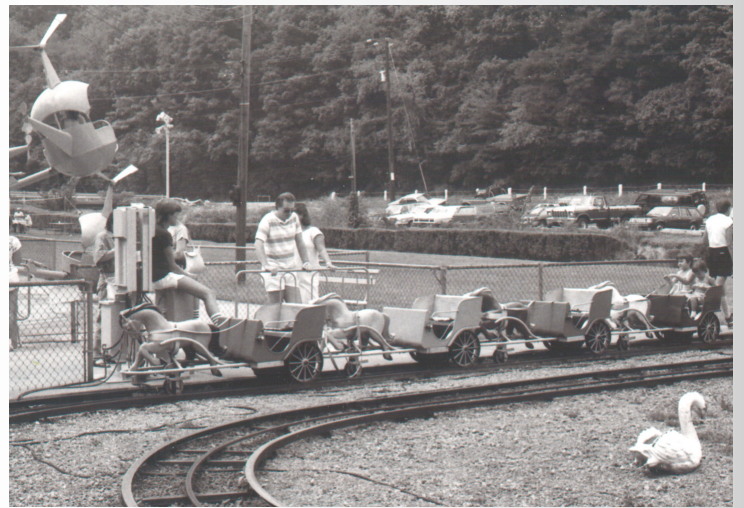
Remembering White Swan Park

All photos by Charles J. Jacques, Jr.

After World War II, a new type of amusement park – the Kiddieland – was born. These parks were built with miniature rides for Baby Boomers. In the Pittsburgh area, one was built in 1955, just off the route to Greater Pittsburgh Airport, which was an attraction in its own right in the 1950s and 1960, as thousands who were intrigued by air travel visited just to watch planes land and take off. White Swan Park opened with seven rides and had a total of 15 when it closed in 1989, when it was sold to make way for a new highway that would lead to the new Pittsburgh International Airport terminal. The park was owned and operated by the brother/sister team of Roy Todd and Margaret Kleeman. Occupying a little over 40 acres, the rides included a SDC *Galaxi* coaster (still operating at Joyland in Lubbock, Texas), a Herschell *Mad Mouse* (moved to Lakemont, but later scrapped), Eli Ferris wheel, Scrambler, Tilt-A-Whirl, train, carousel, giant slide and several classic kiddie rides.

Thanks to amusement park historian and author Charles J. Jacques Jr. for sharing these great pictures that he took in 1978. Mr. Jacques still has three different books available for sale that focus on regional parks; "Kennywood: Roller Coaster Capital of the World" (\$24.95), "More Kennywood Memories" (\$29.95) and "Goodbye, West View Park, Goodbye" (\$24.95). He's always happy to sign them for buyers and he's been known to graciously offer ACE members free shipping! For information, please contact him at apjacqu@centurylink.net.





CALENDAR OF REGIONAL EVENTS

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

Saturday, July 11, 2015

ACE Idlewild
Neighborhood Picnic
Idlewild Park and SoakZone
Ligonier, PA

Sunday, July 12, 2015

KennyKon XXVI
Kennywood
West Mifflin, PA

Saturday, July 25, 2015

Gary Baker Memorial Day
Lakemont Park
Altoona, PA

Saturday - Sunday

August 29-30, 2015

Flying High with a Blue Streak
Waldameer/Conneaut Lake Park
Erie/Meadville, PA

Saturday

March 5, 2016

CoasterBash! XXVII
Salvatores
South Hills/Pittsburgh, PA



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



P O Box 15353
Pittsburgh PA
15237-0553
USA

FIRST CLASS MAIL