



# ACE octogenarian takes 80 rides on Jack Rabbit

Photo spread on page 4

# The Fun Times

The FUNOFFICIAL Newsletter of ACE Western Pennsylvania

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February, 2013

## Idlewild Park Receives Historic Recognition

by Joel Brewton

Idlewild Park, a longtime staple of southwest Pennsylvania's entertainment industry, received a new honor on Saturday, October 11, 2012, with the dedication of a new roadside plaque in honor of the park's history.

In recognition of the park's 135th operating season, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission honored Idlewild with an official historic marker, placed along Route 30, by one of the park's exits. Idlewild has already received national attention with its current distinction as World's Best Children's Park, a title formerly held by Legoland California.

An official dedication ceremony was held that Saturday morning with speeches from Jeff Croushore; sales and public relations manager for Idlewild, Jean Craig Pepper; commissioner for the Pennsylvania

*continued on page 3*

photo by Joel Brewton



## Remembering Carl Hughes 1921 - 2012

by Bill Linkenheimer III

In 1986, I spent the summer after my freshman year of college working at Kennywood. On one slow, late evening, I was stationed at the "controls" of Le Cachot, one of two rides on my crew. There was hardly a soul around, and all nine of the ride's chariots were parked on the platform facing the midway. Carl Hughes was making his rounds of the park, but instead of walking by, he entered the queue line to take a ride! I greeted him by name just before I "buzzed" the electric motor-driven car through the wooden doors and into the sound of the screaming bats. The young lady working the exit, "catching cars" as they finished the ride, ran to the entrance area in a panic, wondering why he was riding the ride. She said she was too nervous to "catch" his car, so before Hughes' 90-second journey ended, we swapped positions, and I was there to greet Kennywood's leader. "How was it?" I asked. He replied with "Bravo!" and a couple of handclaps, showing much the same enthusiasm that many 10 year olds exhibited as they exited the ride. Needless to say, we were happy that he approved.

Hughes went to work full-time for Kennywood in 1956, simultaneously serving as publicity director and



Photo by Bill Stevenson.

Carl Hughes at a PAPA (Pennsylvania Amusement Parks & Attractions) event at DelGrosso's Amusement Park in 2003.



Richard Murch Collection

*continued on page 5*



Hello and welcome to the winter issue of *The Fun Times*. After having survived the Mayan Apocalypse without a problem, it is now time to focus our attention to every enthusiast's favorite pastime, ROLLER COASTERS!!! 2012 was not a year without loss though, as we witnessed the demolition of Kings Island's *Son of Beast* roller coaster, and Hurricane Sandy caused damage to a steel coaster on the pier in Seaside Heights, New Jersey. Where there is a gap in our coaster census, it does not remain long. There are several new coasters on the horizon for 2013, one of them just a short day trip away at Cedar Point. Here's looking to see what all 2013 has in store for enthusiasts everywhere!

See you in the queues!

*Matt*

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**REP RAP**

by **Bill Linkenheimer III**

**QUESTION:** Seriously, how much work can it possibly be to put together a six- or eight-page regional newsletter that's published three times a year?

**ANSWER:** Probably more work than you'd believe!

The number of tasks involved in putting together this six-page issue of *The Fun Times* and each issue like it is surprisingly mind-numbing. Line up authors and photographers to cover events (before the events take place), remind contributors of deadlines, chase down contributors for their articles and photos (sometimes after the deadlines!), plan a proofing and production schedule, inform other team members of the schedule, visualize the layout and convey it to the editor, rearrange some of the layout when it doesn't work out as planned, send drafts to the team to proof, review drafts and look for everything from spelling and grammar to missing lines and layouts gone askew, collate revisions, request more proofs, fill in missing material at the last minute, get color proofs, get proofs in 11 x 17 format for printing, double- and triple-check all proofs to be sure that no revisions have been missed, and soon, you'll be ready to print!

In case you're wondering, those are essentially the duties of the managing editor. And Maggie Altman, who held that post from 2009 to 2012, made it look easy. Don't get me wrong -- it was no walk in the park -- but Maggie handled it all with such ease and grace that I forgot what a pain in the butt it all is. Maggie tirelessly served the members of ACE Western Pennsylvania as a staff member of *The Fun Times* for many, many years, including as stylistic/technical editor, before taking a big step up to the plate with her commitment to serve as managing editor. After advance notice and careful planning, and without fanfare, following the release

of the June 2012 issue, Maggie retired from the newsletter, as other important things in life were demanding her time. On behalf of both ACE Western Pennsylvania and myself, I'd like to thank Maggie for her years of service to the region's newsletter. Maggie has played a large role in the accolades and awards that *The Fun Times* has received. And I'm pleased to report that Maggie will still maintain some involvement as the person who compiles the recurring "Small Talk with the Koaster Kids" section.

Since the September 2012 issue, assistant regional rep Ryan Lucas quietly assumed the managing editor responsibilities. Please join me in thanking Ryan for taking on this challenge and welcoming him as he settles into this demanding role and begins to make his mark on *The Fun Times*. And most important, if you're a contributing writer or photographer, help Ryan to stay sane and adhere to deadlines!

With the extraordinary amount of work that goes into creating these six pages, I can't even fathom what it takes to put out 20 pages of ACE News every other month. Our hats are off to current ACE News editor Mike Thompson, as well as Mark Davidson and Scott Rutherford who preceded him. In the era of ACE News as we know it today, it's remarkable that it's had only those three very talented editors. And ACE is very lucky to have volunteers like them and Maggie and Ryan, who work so diligently on publications for the benefit of ACE's members.



Maggie Altman



Ryan Lucas

# Idlewild Park Receives Historic Recognition

*continued from page 1*

Historical and Museum Commission, and Dave Hahner Jr. of ACE who first nominated the park for its historical distinction in 2010.

Hahner, ACE's historian, stated in an interview following the dedication that the nomination process began during a weekend at Idlewild with Croushore showing him the park's first Golden Ticket Award and talking about how he had been toying with the idea of nominating the park's Rollo Coaster for the title of an ACE Coaster Landmark.

"We began talking about different historical markers... and at that point I said 'Well you guys don't have a state historic marker yet and you're older than Kennywood,'" said Hahner.

Hahner began working with Croushore, who also authored an "Images of America" book on Idlewild in 2004, over the two-year process by supplying extensive amounts of information and history to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to receive the marker.

Croushore himself stated that the event resonates with him personally. "I grew up coming to Idlewild and I have so many special family memories: My first roller coaster ride, gathering around the picnic tables throughout the grounds and just a lot of lifetime family memories which make it a very special event for me and everyone here at the park," said Croushore.

The trademark navy blue and gold plaque reads as follows:

## Idlewild Park

The longest-operating amusement park in Pa. and among the oldest in the nation. In 1878, Thomas Mellon leased land along his Ligonier Valley Railroad hoping to increase passenger traffic by opening a picnic ground. Amusement rides began to be added in the 1890s; several rides from the 1930s continue to operate today. Surviving the railroad closure, two World Wars and the Great Depression, Idlewild provides nationally recognized family recreation.

*Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission 2012©*



**Edmund Gaskill** was in a Halloween costume contest at Knoebels during Phoenix Phall Phunfest and came in 2nd place out of nearly 140 entries . . . Congratulations to **Aaron Maricic** who recently became engaged to **Lisa Kesser** . . . condolences to **Adam Napotnik**, whose godfather, State Trooper **Blake Coble**, died in the line of duty as the result of tragic accident in early October . . . **Roy Todd**, who founded and built the now-defunct White Swan Park (1955-1989) passed away in early September at the age of 95 . . .



photo by Stephen Gray

**Terry Hahner** (seated) celebrated her 50th birthday during the 2012 ACE Spring Conference at Cedar Point last May with a cake delivered by none other than park vice president and general manager **John Hildebrandt** (second from left) and Cedar Fair CEO **Matt Ouimet** (third from left) along with husband **Dave** (left) and son **David** (right) . . .



We're sad to report that **Homer Lee Bolt**, 66, passed away in early November. In addition to being an early ACE member, more recently Lee was known for his devotion to Conneaut Lake Park, where he was one of the "Blue Streak Boys" working tirelessly to help with upkeep of the park.

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**

# VIC KLEMAN TURNS 80 WITH 80 RIDES ON JACK RABBIT

On August 19, 2012, ACEers and Kennywood officials joined Vic Kleman as he celebrated his 80th birthday with 80 rides on the park's Jack Rabbit.

All photos by Sarah Windisch except as noted. Photo of Sarah Windisch and Vic by Erik Frankenstein. Mary Lou and Vic by Kennywood on ride photos.



# Remembering Carl Hughes

*continued from page 1*

assistant general manager. Prior to that, both before and after serving in World War II, Hughes did some part-time publicity, writing news releases for the park while working full-time as a sports writer for *The Pittsburgh Press*. When general manager Frank Danahey died in 1960, Hughes was promoted to head the park. In 1976, upon the death of company president Harry Henninger Sr., Hughes became president. In 1985, when Carl Henninger, chairman of the board, passed away, Hughes assumed that title as well. Remarkably, Hughes was the first outsider – not a member of either family with ownership in the park – to serve as general manager, president or chairman. His daily duties at the park wound down in 2001, when he retired, but he continued to serve as chairman emeritus. Kennywood became a family affair for Hughes as well. His wife, Anny, and daughter, Mary Lou Rosemeyer, each handled public relations for the park.

Hughes also was heavily involved in the International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions (IAAPA), where he served on countless committees and ascended to the presidency of the organization, making him the first park official who didn't have an ownership stake in an amusement park to serve in that role. In 1990, IAAPA launched its Hall of Fame. Among the first inductees, who included Walt Disney and LaMarcus A. Thompson and John Allen, was none other than Carl Hughes – the very first living inductee – who was described during the ceremony as the unofficial ambassador of the amusement industry to the world.

All that Hughes did for the amusement industry as a whole did not eclipse his impact on Kennywood. During the time that Hughes oversaw Kennywood, dozens upon dozens of other traditional parks sadly disappeared. Kennywood remained, thanks to Hughes' direction that allowed the park to improve, mature and grow from a typical, locally focused amusement park to something more: a clean park with a sense of history and its place in it that would delicately blend the old and the new, as it continues to do to this day.

Kennywood's Andy Quinn shared one of the mottos that guided Hughes' management: "No one *has* to come to Kennywood. Don't forget that." He was referring to competition, whether it be other parks or other businesses competing for the public's entertainment dollars. With this in mind, the park always challenged itself to do a better job – whether improving visual aspects of the park, adding new rides and attractions or promoting other advancements to make the park a better place to visit. The park's first million-dollar rides were added during Hughes' tenure, including Log Jammer, Raging Rapids and *Laser Loop*, which arrived just in time for ACE's Coaster Con III in 1980. Standards were raised regarding how the park should look – from the condition of buildings to landscaping to cleanliness. Changes weren't always things that the public would notice as new or improved, but they enhanced the quality of their visit. Entire buildings were sometimes replaced with new ones, such as the Pagoda and Pastime building. Hughes thought that the chain link fence that once surrounded *Thunderbolt's* structure near Potato Patch wasn't up to par, so it was replaced with attractive black iron fencing.

With writing in his background, Hughes was a marketer and an "idea guy." "The most beautiful music in the world is the sound of children laughing" was Hughes' slogan that became identified with the park's Kiddieland. When in the

1970s *Thunderbolt* received top honors in Robert Cartmell's now legendary list of top ten coasters in *The New York Times*, Hughes coined the term "Roller Coaster Capital of the World" to describe Kennywood. Richard Munch, one of ACE's founders and the organization's first president, stated "While there were many involved with Kennywood's turnaround in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was Hughes who was probably the biggest force behind the changes at the park during that time. He was influential in the *Pippin* remodel and upgrade [to *Thunderbolt*] and he was instrumental in creating the aura of Kennywood as a coaster park."

It was also under Hughes' leadership that Kennywood became Kennywood Entertainment and expanded by adding other properties. In 1983 it bought Idlewild, and Hughes' vision would lead it to become one of the world's finest parks for families and kids. In 1989, Sandcastle waterpark was constructed atop the site of a former steel mill in West Homestead. In 1995, the company purchased and restored Lake Compounce, the country's oldest continuously operating amusement park.

In 1986, I thought that Hughes' nighttime spin on a dark ride was random and perhaps eccentric, but looking back, it's clear that it was just part of his mission not to overlook any part of Kennywood and his belief that all aspects of the park were significant. Although *Le Cachot* didn't survive, Kennywood does and continues to thrive, thanks in large part to all the efforts of Carl Hughes to make it the world's finest traditional amusement park.

## CALENDAR OF REGIONAL EVENTS

Saturday, March 2, 2013

**CoasterBash! XXIV**

Salvatore's

Pittsburgh, PA

Sunday, March 3, 2013

**Wisp Mountain Coaster**

Wisp Mountain Resort

McHenry, MD

information: [ACEmidatlantic.org](http://ACEmidatlantic.org)

Sunday, July 14, 2013

**KennyKon XXIV**

Kennywood

West Mifflin, PA

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

# Conneaut Lake Park's Ghost Lake

by Sarah Windisch

On Saturday, October 20, 2012, about two dozen enthusiasts gathered outside of Conneaut Lake Park to enjoy "Ghost Lake." After discounted tickets were purchased, attendees joined the line to tackle the "eight levels of fear:" Clown Town, Rot's Funeral Home, House of Fear, Maze of Terror, Insanity, the Un-Fun-House, Devil's Den (converted to a walkthrough), and the Ghoster Coaster (*Blue Streak*).

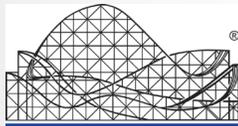
Designed to increase in fear intensity, depending on what scares a person (or doesn't), different things produced many laughs as well as screams. From fog to bubbles, monsters to clowns, snakes to horses,



Ghost Lake had something for everybody. And for ACE members, that ride on *Blue Streak* "Ghoster Coaster" was far more fun than fright!



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



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