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The Fun Times

The FUNOFFICIAL Newsletter of ACE Western Pennsylvania

Vol. 27, No. 1 February 2017





Photo by Sarah Windisch

Vic Kleman 1932-2016

By Chuck George and Jim Kline

We first met Vic at Kennywood in April, 1992, at a Mid-Atlantic Coaster Club event. We had become members of ACE in

1991. He and his friend, Thelma Bailey, were sitting in a pavilion near the Log Jammer. When we walked in, he looked up at us and delivered a big "HI" that was the beginning of a beautiful 24 year friendship. We went to our first ACE Coaster Con (annual convention) in the summer of 1992 at Kings Dominion and Busch Gardens Williamsburg. The three of us would go on to travel together to many more conferences and conventions. We also took many trips on our own to other parks just to have fun and enjoy each other's company.

He loved attending

CoasterBash! every year, and was honored to be the first recipient of The Golden Kenny

award. But it was at Kennywood where Vic was happiest. We always had fun with him, whether it was riding or just walking around the park.

When someone said something sarcastic to him, he would always respond with "Bite me" and then laugh.

We attended many of his theater performances. One time we saw him in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and he was so funny that we couldn't stop laughing. The entire cast wanted to know who we were and Vic just laughed and said they we were his best friends. He had a great singing voice and was such a great actor no matter what role he played.

"THANK YOU VIC," for giving us 24 years of fun times, laughter

and most importantly, a true and lasting friendship. Enjoy riding your coasters up above.



Vic Kleman has found all of Pittsburgh is a stage. He is pictured on left in scene from "The King and I" and on right from "Hello, Dolly," This weekend he's in "My Fat Friend" at Theater on the Ridge.

Klemanwas highlighted in a 1978 edition of the *Pittsburgh Press*

See page 3 for memories of Vic Kleman



Congratulations to Kennywood General Manager Jerome Gibas, who recently celebrated 40 years of marriage and did so by enjoying two weeks in Hawaii ... condolences to Linda and Bernie Cramer on the passing of their 17-year old cat, Eddy . . . the 1896 Victorian house that Brian and Pam Kanai, and their daughter April Kanai call home, was featured in the Christmas in Crafton House Tour, with the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette writing "What makes the house unique is its amusement park-themed décor." ... Roni Brocato and **April Kanai** seized the opportunity to play drums with the Knoebels house band during the Friday evening portion of the park's Phoenix Phall Phunfest event . . . Though Lee Ann Draud was a resident of Philadelphia until the tail end of 2016, that didn't stop her from attending nearly every ACE Western Pennsylvania event for the past 15 years, and now she'll have a shorter commute, as she's moved into the Western Pennsylvania region, specifically, to Edgewood or "the Kennywood exit" as she puts it . . . congratulations to Garrett Sauers who is studying film production at Pittsburgh Filmmakers . . . congratulations to **Stephen** Gray and Maureen Connolly, who got engaged in November, while visiting Hilton Head Island and then a week later appeared on the Kiss Cam at PPG Paints Arena during a Penguins game . . . condolences to friends and family of George Britton, who was in introduced to ACE by **Debbie Sykes** in the late 1990s, remained a member for many years and recently passed away after a long battle with Huntington's Disease . . . 2016 was a big year for Dave Swank and Erika Frantz – they were married with a reception at the National Aviary, honeymooned in Europe (including a visit to Blackpool Pleasure Beach!) and learned that 2017 will be bringing them a child . . . congratulations to David Hahner III whose submission won first prize in the CoasterCon XXXIX video contest . . .



Hello and welcome to the winter issue of *The Fun Times*. Effective with this issue, event fliers will no longer be enclosed with mailings. The event flier, including the mail-in registration form, can be found on the region's website, as well as a link to online registration. Direct links can also be found on page 8 of this newsletter.

See you in the queues!

Matt

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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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CALENDAR OF REGIONAL EVENTS

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



= A Western PA Classic =



Saturday, March 4, 2017 Salvatores South Hills, Pittsburgh, PA



Saturday July 22, 2017 Kennywood West Mifflin, PA



KennyKon XXVII weathered the storm

by Sarah Windisch

Sunday, July 24, started out as a sunny morning, warm enough to make Ice Cream For Breakfast, benefiting Give Kids the World, a typical summer treat. It seemed like a perfect day for ACE Western Pennsylvania's annual

KennyKon. The morning ERT included rides on Thunderbolt and Turtle, with tours of Noah's Ark celebrating its 80th anniversary and renovations done to the attraction for 2016. Kennywood's Marie Ruby and ACE's Bill Linkenheimer III served as

summer. Reverend Cliff Herring spoke eloquently not only about Vic, but about our ACE friendships. The floor

was then opened up to anybody who wished to speak,

and several people came forward. Bill Linkenheimer

Vic being a good sport; Brian Kanai brought up Vic's marathons on Jack Rabbit and what makes that coaster so special; Joel Brewton discussed his time working Phantom Fright Nights with Vic in the Kennyville Cemetery; and this author spoke about

III spoke about

tour guides, taking groups through the Ark, pointing out details and sharing stories. After the tours concluded, the group photo was taken in front of the Ark and the 184 attendees were set free to explore the park and enjoy its variety of classic rides and coasters.

Scheduled ITOTs (Informal Take Over Times) included Swing Shot, The Exterminator, Kenny's Parkway (the chairlift in the parking lot – a rare treat!), Racer and Jack Rabbit. Many people headed to the picnic pavilion early, not only due to incoming bad weather but for a "time of remembrance" for longtime local ACE

member Vic Kleman, who passed away earlier in the Photo by Joel Brewton

Vic's positive influence to "lead by example" during an ACE snow tubing event several years ago. A great friend who was lots of fun - it was clear by everybody's comments that Vic will be missed by many.

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During the ceremony, the weather turned into a thunderstorm with a total downpour, leading to the park choosing to close early. After our delicious catered



meal, it was announced that we would still have our ERT on Phantom's Revenge. With the rain letting up only after our meal. around 7 p.m., most of us headed over for an early evening ERT. Some attendees who



would not normally be able to stay for a later ERT were able to take a few rides and still get on the road early, helping many to deal with the disappointing weather. In any weather, ACE members seem to



make the best of it and have a great time, especially enjoying each other's company.

Thanks to the staff of Kennywood for the great Ark tours and for staying after the storms to allow us to have our Phantom ERT!

Western Pennsylvania provides a solid showing at the Golden Ticket Awards

This past September, Amusement Today's Golden Ticket Awards ceremony was held at Cedar Point and ACE Western Pennsylvania parks had one of their best showings ever!



Bill Linkenheimeı Photo

Roller coasters were the category that saw the most uptick for our region's parks. Ravine Flyer II at Waldameer & Water World was ranked #5 on the list of Top Wood Roller Coaster, its highest placement yet. Kennywood's Jack Rabbit, Thunderbolt and Racer all made the Top 50, at 20th, 21st and 43rd respectively. Blue Streak at Conneaut Lake Park was rated 38th. We're also thrilled that another traditional park, Lake Compounce in Connecticut, which happens to be Kennywood's sister park, is home to Boulder Dash, the #1 ranked woodie for the fourth consecutive year and fifth timer in the award's history. For steel roller coasters, Phantom's Revenge at Kennywood was ranked #10, cracking the top 10 for the first time in many years!

Noah's Ark at Kennywood received the Golden Ticket for Best Funhouse/Walk-Through attraction for the seventh consecutive year. The renovations made to the Ark for the 2016 season certainly didn't hurt! With a commanding lead, Idlewild and SoakZone was ranked #1 Best Childrens Park, also for the seventh consecutive year.

Kennywood's Phantom Fright Nights was ranked fourth for Best Halloween Event and for the first time, Kennywood's Holiday Lights cracked the top five for

Best Christmas Event, making Kennywood the only park to be ranked on the top five in both of these special event categories!

Two things that we'd love to see in the future: Phantom Fright Nights climb higher in the Best Halloween Event rankings and DelGrosso's to make the top five in Best Food.



Photo by

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A late summer tradition in northwestern Pennsylvania

By Elena Marziale

On the last weekend of August, 80 enthusiasts participated in an ACE Western Pennsylvania traditional end of summer event, held in conjunction with Western New York Coaster Club – Flying High with a Blue Streak. On Saturday, August 27, attendees were able to experience firsthand some of the improvements at Conneaut Lake Park. Upon entering the park, one is now greeted by the freshly painted water slides for the waterpark, which opened this season after sitting dormant for several years. Many patrons were enjoying the water slides and lazy river. More food kiosks were available and Hotel Conneaut now serves food on its



porch. As far as rides, Tumble Bug was tons of fun as always, Devils Den was enjoyed by many and the train ride did not derail! A delicious homemade spaghetti dinner was prepared by Lenny Adams' wife, Stacey. At the end of the evening, attendees enjoyed ERT on the ACE Coaster Classic and ACE Roller Coaster Landmark Blue Streak, which is one of the best rides to experience in the dark.



On Sunday, August 28, attendees headed north on Interstate 79 to experience another Western Pennsylvania traditional park, Waldameer, Park President Steve Gorman was present to greet everyone for morning ERT on Comet and Steel Dragon, a spinning coaster. Steve also provided coffee and donuts which were a much-appreciated treat. ACE members were able to enjoy many of the traditional rides and attractions of this beautiful park. A picnic lunch of hot dogs and hamburgers was served in the Lakeview picnic pavilion, which is the site of the loading station for the original Ravine Flyer. Owner Paul Nelson spoke to attendees during lunch and thanked everyone for rating the Ravine Flyer II as one of their favorite wooden coasters in Amusement Today's Golden Ticket Awards. After lunch, attendees were able to take a walk back tour of the lower portion of Ravine Flyer while others took advantage of the waterpark to cool off on a hot summer day. The day ended with ERT on Ravine Flyer II, which was running fast and smooth as always. This ride truly lives up to its name and never fails to provide a memorable ride.

Thanks to Geff Ford and Western New York Coaster Club for coordinating this event with ACE Western Pennsylvania and thanks to the management and staff of both parks for providing a weekend of riding coasters and spending time with friends – a perfect way to end the summer!



Photo by Sarah Windisch

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ACE Ghost Lake 2016

A hardy group of ACE and DAFE members gathered on October 21 at Conneaut Lake Park for the annual informal meetup at Ghost Lake. Cool and breezy weather made for an appropriately chilly atmosphere as attendees faced the park's "13 levels of fea,r" which conclude with a ride on the *Blue Streak* under the shroud of darkness. As seen in the pictures, the bubble room was of particular enjoyment.





Photo by Sarah Windisch

ACE/DAFE Phantom Fright Night 2016

On October 22, Kennywood hosted enthusiasts from across several states for the 15th edition of ACE-DAFE Phantom Fright Night. Before the park opened, attendees were escorted to the Penny Arcade, where they enjoyed "exclusive walkthrough time" at the Villa of the Vampire haunt. After making their way through the maze, members and their guests were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the park's makeup department, where dozens of actors were being transformed into ghouls, cowboys and clowns. The park permitted a volunteer to get into the action as well; Tay Dearborn of Michigan (who happened to be at Kennywood for the very first time) got a scary face of her own. Hopefully this made her first trip a memorable one!





Photo by Sara Hindisch

ACE Holiday Magic 2016

A large group of members and their guests visited Kennywood on November 27 to ring in the holiday season with the region's annual Holiday Lights gathering. Attendees were let into the park early for exclusive "meet and greet" time with Santa Claus and several of the park's festive characters. Noah's Ark was then opened so that the group could enjoy the newly renovated attraction, which shone bright with the addition of thousands of lights and decorations added just for Holiday Lights.





Photo by Joel Brewton

THE FUN TIMES FEBRUARY 2017



Saturday, March 4, 2017 Salvatore's Pittsburgh's South Hills

View, download and/or print the event flier and registration form at www.acewesternpa.org/fliers/ coasterbashxxviii.pdf

Register online at www.acewesternpa.org/registration

NO PRINTED EVENT FLYER WILL BE MAILED!

The longest-running regional nocoaster event is back for its 28th year. ACE Western Pennsylvania is again prepared to present an evening of friendship, industry speakers, door prizes, auctions, multimedia and great food. Speaking for the first time at CoasterBash! will be representatives from Six Flags Fiesta Texas who will be previewing this summer's CoasterCon.

CoasterBash! is held at Salvatore's which is located approximately seven miles south of downtown Pittsburgh in the borough of Baldwin.

No on-site registration will be available.



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





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