

The Fun Times

The FUNOFFICIAL Newsletter of ACE Western Pennsylvania



Idlewild ranked #1 Children's Park/Kennywood still has coaster clout

By Bill Linkenheimer III

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — At Amusement Today's annual Golden Ticket Award ceremony on September 11, 2010, Jeff Croushore, Idlewild's public relations manager, Jeff Filicko, Kennywood's public relations manager and Brandon Leonatti, Idlewild's general manager were all present. It's highly uncommon for either of these regional parks to send representatives to the ceremony, which this year was held at Busch Gardens Williamsburg. But 2010 was special – both parks received a “#1” designation. As often as western Pennsylvania parks make top 10 lists for various categories, getting that coveted top spot has been highly uncommon – but hopefully a new trend has emerged!

The big news is that Idlewild & SoakZone of Ligonier was named the world's #1 Children's Park in the Golden Tickets, ousting Legoland in Carlsbad, California, which has held that title for a very long time. Idlewild has held the #2 position for several years, a point that has been heavily marketed by the park. Surely the park will be happy to reinvest in new marketing materials to promote its new and well-deserved #1 status.

Western Pennsylvanians have long known what a treasure of a kids park Idlewild is, and with this new honor, increased national recognition should be coming Idlewild's way.

The other regional #1 was somewhat of a surprise. Kennywood's Noah's Ark is now recognized by the Golden Tickets as the #1 Funhouse/Walk Through Attraction in the world! While there is definitely some great competition in this category, including some fairly extensive attractions, it seems that the historic value of the Ark resonated well with voters this year.

Kennywood and Idlewild were so pleased with their honors that each park had a full-page ad in the Golden Ticket Bonus Issue of Amusement Today.

In a region with an astounding nine wood coasters at five different parks, it's no surprise that one is on the Top 10 and it's the region's newest woodie -- Waldameer's Ravine Flyer II is the world's #6 ranked Wooden Coaster! And despite all of the region's tradition, the world's #9 ranked Steel Coaster is Kennywood's Phantom's Revenge.

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S'MALL TALK WITH THE KOASTER KIDS

Hello and welcome to the latest issue of *The Fun Times*. If you haven't already noticed, we are unveiling a new and updated look to our award winning newsletter. This was an opportune time (the start of a new year) for us here at *The Fun Times* to freshen up the style of the newsletter. I would like to extend my thanks to regional ACEer and graphic artist Mike Matscherz, who was very instrumental in designing the new format of the newsletter. Mike simplified the look by creating new logos for our specialty columns, creating a new masthead, and using a different type face for the articles. We feel that the new look will be pleasing to our readers, and hope that you will continue to get all of the enjoyment you have come to expect from your regional publication.

See you in the queues,
Matt

compiled by Maggie Altman

Like spring, it has been a while since the appearance of this column (well truthfully it's been more like three springs!) and we're happy to highlight a regional member who is among ACE's newest generation.

Zach Schrott



Nominations sought for The Golden Kenny



Nominations are now being accepted for the recipient of The Golden Kenny, an annual award presented to celebrate the ENTHUSIASM of an ACE member within ACE Western Pennsylvania. If you know of someone deserving of this award, please write

a summary explaining why, and forward it to Jeff Filicko at Kennywood either via email at JFilicko@Kennywood.com or by conventional mail at Attn: Jeff Filicko, Kennywood, 4800 Kennywood Blvd, West Mifflin, PA 15122. The 2011 award will be presented at CoasterBash! XXII on March 5, 2011.

THE QUEUE LINE

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

Antoinette Davis.....	Pittsburgh
Eric Goodman.....	Wexford
Michael Houston.....	Cranberry Twp
Floria, Lindsay, Nina & Todd McElhattan.....	Gibsonia
Laura, Laurance & Thomas Nakrosis.....	Indiana
Krisofer Robinson.....	Wexford
Michelle Russo.....	New Castle
David Steidle.....	Huntingdon
Michael Varga.....	Fredonia
Nathan Ward.....	Turtle Creek
Linda Yankovich.....	Sharpsville

Age:	13
Joined ACE on:	January 1, 2010
First ACE event:	KennyKon XX
First Coaster Ridden:	Jack Rabbit
First amusement park:	Kennywood
Total Coaster Count:	58
Favorite Steel Coaster:	Intimidator 305
Favorite Wood Coaster:	Knoebels Phoenix
Favorite non-coaster ride:	Pitt Fall
Favorite coaster experience:	riding the front seat in Top Thrill Dragster
Comments:	I love the experience of ERT and meeting new people.

If you are 16 years old or younger and would like to be profiled in an upcoming issue of *The Fun Times* please contact Maggie Altman at KoasterKids@ACEwesternPA.org. You will receive a short questionnaire to be returned with a photo. The photo will be returned upon request.

Rep Rap



Coaster Con XXXIII in June 2010 was a tremendous opportunity to showcase the wonderful traditional parks that we have here in Western Pennsylvania. Kennywood, Idlewild, Conneaut Lake Park, Waldameer and even Sandcastle, all rolled out the red carpet for attendees, showcasing the truly unique parks that we can proudly boast in our region. Add in the two host parks for the pre-convention Allegheny Mountain Madness regional event at Lakemont Park and DelGrosso's Amusement Park, ACE members had the golden opportunity to visit SIX regional parks that were all over a century old. It was because of this unique opportunity, ACE had a chance for the first time ever to designate three historic coasters with ACE Roller Coaster Landmark status during a single event – *Jack Rabbit* and *Racer* at Kennywood and *Blue Streak* at Conneaut Lake Park. As Historian for ACE, it was my privilege to help create these plaques and present them to the parks to signify the historic importance for all three coasters. Needless to say, the parks were very proud to receive these prestigious awards, with each coaster proudly displaying the plaques on or near the ride stations. Along with the previously awarded *Leap-the-Dips* at Lakemont Park, our region now boasts FOUR coasters granted this esteemed status. So, the next time you're visiting Lakemont, Kennywood or Conneaut Lake Park, be sure to check out these historical markers – you might learn a few facts about the history of these remarkable coasters that have thrilled western Pennsylvania riders for generations and hopefully will for many more generations to come.

Speaking of Conneaut Lake Park and *Blue Streak*, it is truly remarkable that that this historic park was able to reopen to the public in 2009 after closing due to financial problems in 2006 and suffering a devastating arsonist's fire that destroyed the beautiful Dreamland Ballroom and park maintenance shop in early 2009. On Sept 2, 2010, even more good news occurred at CLP as the venerable Edward Vettel-designed *Blue Streak* once again began thrilling riders after the first phase of a major renovation by Lenny Adams and his staff at Structural Technologies began in May of 2010. A huge thank you to all ACE members who helped support the park and the coaster, whether by donations, volunteering for clean-up, voting daily online in the Pepsi Refresh Everything campaign to help *Blue Streak* receive a \$50,000 grant or simply by visiting the park. Without your continued support, the reopening of the park and *Blue Streak* may have never happened. There's much more work to be done to keep them operating, so please continue your support and spread the word about this wonderful traditional park and its terrific wooden coaster that just refuses to die.

You can continue to support Conneaut Lake Park's restoration efforts by voting in the Pepsi Refresh Everything campaign. Conneaut Lake Park's plan to restore the midway and Fun House has been accepted as one of the January 2011 ideas eligible to be voted on to receive a \$50,000 grant from the Pepsi Refresh Project. Full details are available at <http://www.refresheverything.com/conneautlakeparkmidway>.

Congratulations to all the following regional members . . . **Christian Bruggeman**, who landed an internship with Microsoft and will be spending the summer in Seattle . . . **Elaine Linkenheimer** and **Dolores Cavic** who traveled to Italy in October . . . **Fred Wink** who has made a successful recovery from knee replacement surgery in September and is eager to visit some parks this year . . . **Mike Matscherz** who has had his job with Aramark move from the Mellon Arena to the Consol Energy Center, where he's responsible for staffing and training . . . several local members who are on ACE's new Executive Committee, including **Dave Altman**, president, **Brian Peters**, information services director, **Dave Hahner**, historian, Loyal ACE Western Pennsylvania supporters **Lee Ann Draud** of Philadelphia and **Steve Smith** of Ohio who are serving as publication director and registration director, respectively . . . **Brian Peters** who has started a new job . . . **Jim Kline** who has pulled himself out of retirement and is working part-time at a flower shop . . . **April Lucas** who graduated from Clarion University with a BS degree in Special Education / Early Childhood Education . . .

Condolences to **Lee Ann Draud**, whose father passed away in October and to **Dave Altman**, whose father passed away in December . . .

Several longtime members of ACE's Executive Committee recently stepped down to allow some fresh minds with new ideas to serve ACE. We would like to thank regional rep **Bill Linkenheimer III**, (17 consecutive years) and former regional rep **Harry Sykes**, (14 years) for all of their devotion in service to ACE . . . thanks also to **Maggie Altman** who departed the position of registration director and has served on the registration committee since 2002 . . . Premier Rides had a full-page ad in the October issue of *Amusement Today* touting Kennywood's *Sky Rocket* that included quotes from ACE members including ACE Western Pennsylvanians **Cequenda Bruggeman** and **Jim Kline** . . . with **Barry Kumpf's** departure from Lakemont Park last summer, he resigned his post as first vice president of Pennsylvania Amusement Park Association (PAPA) and DelGrosso's Amusement Park's **Carl Crider**, who was second vice president, was elevated to that position . . . local ACEer **Chase Fiore** had much of his photographic work of *Sky Rocket* published in recent issues of *ACE News* and *RollerCoaster!* . . . With all of the coverage of the new coaster as well as Coaster Con XXXIII, **Dave Hahner**, **Rich Koppelman** and **Sarah Windisch** were other locals to get photo credits in our favorite publications . . . speaking of *RollerCoaster!*, Kennywood's **Andy Quinn** was the first person to be the subject of the magazine's new Industry Profile feature, where he was pictured with his grandchildren, **Nate Quinn** and **Jake Quinn** . . . well wishes to **Elaine Linkenheimer**, who continues to recover from mid-December back surgery . . . if you thought you saw a familiar face in the crowd of the Steelers vs. Saints game in New Orleans, yes, that was indeed **Maggie Altman** . . . Congratulations to **Maggie Altman**, **Brenton Asti**, **Cequenda Bruggeman**, **Christian Bruggeman**, **Dolores Cavic**, **Jerome Gibas**, **Stephen Gray**, **Bill Linkenheimer III**, **Dave Lucas**, **Ryan Lucas**, and **Mike Matscherz** who attended the 2011 NHL Winter Classic hockey game at Heinz Field on New Year's Day . . . **Val** and **April Lucas** camped out all night on the streets of Pasadena to secure a good vantage spot to watch the 2011 Rose Parade . . . **Dave Sandborg** was interviewed on the KDKA-TV news regarding the recent Port Authority Transit fare hikes . . .

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 or send us a note via conventional mail to the editorial address

Western Pennsylvania goes GOLDEN

Continued from page 1

Besides the #1 awards this year, as always, a close inspection of the award lists reveals much to celebrate at our local parks. Kennywood is tied with Blackpool Pleasure Beach as the world's #6 rated Best Park and Phantom Fright Nights at Kennywood is rated as the world's #4 rated Best Halloween Event.



PHOTO BY BILL LINKENHEIMER III

Jeff Filicko, Jeff Croushore and Brandon Leonatti proudly show off their Golden Ticket awards, shortly after receiving them at the ceremony held at Busch Gardens Williamsburg in September.

Perhaps the most interesting thing is Kennywood's Sky Rocket rated the #3 Best New Ride for 2010. As if the good company of #1 ranked Harry Potter at Islands of Adventure and #2 ranked *Intimidator 305* at Kings Dominion weren't flattering enough, consider the tight margin. With Harry Potter and *Intimidator 305* getting 24% and 21% of the vote respectively, Sky Rocket had a very close 20%. Possibly even more impressive is that Sky Rocket debuted on the list of Top 50 Steel Roller Coasters at #17 – not too shabby for a ride that opened barely five weeks before voting ended.

All three of Kennywood's woodies made the list of Top 50 Wooden Roller Coasters. *Thunderbolt* is ranked at #14, *Jack Rabbit* at #20 and *Racer* at #35.



PHOTO BY JEFF CROUSHORE

The Golden Ticket award weekend at Busch Gardens Williamsburg was a September vacation for Brandon Leonatti and his wife Michelle, shown here with their four children, Noah, Gabriel, Elijah and Josiah, all proudly wearing the name of the world's #1 ranked park for children.

After doing our math, we discover that Cedar Point has five rides among the Top 50 Steel Roller Coasters and one among the Top 50 Wooden Roller Coasters (for the record, it's *Blue Streak*, ranked at #47). Kennywood has two entries in the Top 50 Steel Roller Coasters and three in the Top 50 Wooden Roller Coasters. So we learn that 6% of the world's top ranked coasters are at Cedar Point...AND, 5% of the world's top ranked coasters are at Kennywood, which is pretty impressive considering that Cedar Point has a total of 17 coasters and Kennywood has just seven. It's also of relevance to note that no other park has as many top ranked coasters as either of these two. Perhaps "Roller Coaster Capital of the World" isn't such an outdated slogan for Kennywood.

Idlewild is delighted to have to replace all of its banners in the park. PHOTO BY JEFF CROUSHORE



The Golden Ticket Awards are presented by Amusement Today, the world's leading source of amusement industry news. For more information, visit AmusementToday.com and GoldenTicketAwards.com.

#1 Funhouse/walkthrough attraction



#35 wood coaster



#9 steel coaster

PHOTOS BY
DAVE HAHNER



#3 best new ride



#6 wood coaster



KennyKon XXI/ACE Phantom Fright Night



by Chase Fiore

KennyKon XXI took on a slightly different season this year as it was combined with ACE Phantom Fright Night.

On October 10, 2010 (10-10-10) over 100 ACE members coalesced at Kennywood for an event usually held in summer. With the park being a major stop during CoasterCon XXXIII, ACE Western Pennsylvania decided to hold a rare formal event during the park's Phantom Fright Nights, and so combined the two annual events.

ACE members from across the country were in attendance—many with their eyes set on the new SkyRocket roller coaster.

ACEers were able to enjoy the first ever official ERT on SkyRocket before touring the Voodoo Bayou haunt with the lights on. In his usual fashion, Bill Linkenheimer III played the jester by inhabiting an empty coffin to scare unsuspecting members. To his detest, one haunt employee (myself) gained a vengeance for those caught in his trap by hiding behind the Voodoo King's throne and scaring Mr. Linkenheimer.

Kennywood creates seven haunted houses and "scare zones" that cover the entire park. The haunts were an added benefit that usually is not available to KennyKon attendees.

Voodoo Bayou was set in arguably the most interesting location. The haunt replaces the Raging Rapids ride with

a tour deep into the Bayou. Once you're lost from the tour guide, the Voodoo King beckons you in to stay for an eternity.

Noah's Ark is stripped of it's usual theming and replaced with scare boxes and haunted characters.

The park replaces almost every lightbulb with a colored fixture. Even load platforms and bathrooms take on an eerie hue. High powered fog machines blast enough atmospherics to cover the park and parking lot long after they're turned off.

Everyday, hundreds of employees spend hours getting into makeup, repairing show elements and washing costumes for the night. Many do the work simply because they enjoy doing it every year.

The dramatic transformation into a haunted park was a fitting change as the seasons began to shift. The cool autumn weather also made long hours in the park more enjoyable than some hot summer evenings.

The night ended as any day at Kennywood should: with a ride on Phantom's Revenge, with attendees being kept very enthusiastic thanks to Kennywood Team Member and fellow ACEer Aaron Maricic. Although it was sad to walk under the "goodnight" heart and realize the park season was ending, it's difficult to think of a better way to close it.



Chase Fiore (left)
Jeff Fillicko (right)
and the cast of
Voodoo Bayou
(below) from
KennyKon XXI/ACE
Phantom Fright Night
PHOTOS BY
DAVE HAHNER



Nikki Blake making friends with her favorite nemesis "Chainsaw Man" at KennyKon XXI/ACE Phantom Fright Night

CALENDAR OF REGIONAL EVENTS

CoasterBash! XXII

Salvatore's

Pittsburgh, PA

Saturday, March 5, 2011

Mid-Summer Scream

Waldameer Park

Erie, PA

Saturday, July 30, 2011

KennyKon XXII

Kennywood

West Mifflin, PA

Sunday, July 31, 2011

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THE FUN TEAM

Matt Adler

Editor / Asst. Regional Representative

Maggie Altman

Managing Editor

Bill Linkenheimer III

Senior Editor / Regional Representative

Dave Altman, Dave Hahner,

Lisa Corbly, Steve Corbly, Jim Kline

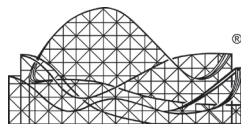
Asst. Regional Representatives / Contributors

Mike Matscherz

Graphic Design coordinator



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Pittsburgh PA
15237-0553
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