KennyKon fun starts near the park entrance, even before the event begins, even before registration begins—even before the registration crew can set up! Time to greet old friends, figure out who’s got the badges, look for the mystery person who was supposed to open the building and laugh a lot about it all. Finally, the registration windows open and lines form. On a bright, sunny Sunday at the very end of July, 215 attendees made their way to Kennywood in West Mifflin from 16 states and Canada to register for a day of riding, anniversaries, contests, and fun with friends at America’s favorite traditional amusement park.

The day began not on Kennywood’s remarkable woodies but on two of its unique steel coasters, with first-ever morning ERT on Sky Rocket and also Phantom’s Revenge, which was celebrating its tenth anniversary.
The Fun Times

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

Randall Barber..................................................Farrell, PA
Daniel Fritzman..................................................Moundsville, WV
Daniel Swartz....................................................Clairton, PA
Linda Kankovich............................................Sharpsville, PA

Mail Bag

I just finished reading my June 2011 issue of The Fun Times and decided that I had to drop you a note to say thank you for continuing to keep me informed via this publication. It is IMPOSSIBLE to have spent 16 years in the amusement industry and to not have formed many friendships during that time with members of ACE.

Among other names in the issue, I loved “catching up” on what’s going with editor Matt Adler and his father, Ed; Nikki Blake; Steve and Lisa Corbly; Dave and Maggie Altman; RJ Ollio (come on, he’s 6, he couldn’t have graduated!); Brian Peters (the big 5-0); Bill Linkenheimer Jr. and his wife, Elaine; and of course, Bill Linkenheimer III. And it’s impossible for me to read one of these issues without thinking about Gary Baker. Gary sure was a pain in the butt sometimes (it’s okay—he knew it!), but what a great guy he was. He loved what he did.

I also enjoyed reading about some of the many friends that I made from within the industry: Steve Gorman of Waldameer (What a stand-up guy he is!), Sam Shurgott of Morey’s Piers (Does anyone have more energy and passion for this industry?), Andy Quinn of Kennywood (What more can I say about Andy? The park’s phone number and his extension were the first that I memorized in the industry, as Andy was my “go-to” guy every time that I had a question. I never did adequately thank him, so I’ll have to buy him a drink the next time I see him!).

Barry Kumpf
GM, Blair County Convention Center
former GM, Lakemont Park

Editor: Thanks, Barry. We’re glad you’re enjoying the effort that we put into making The Fun Times all about the people of ACE Western Pennsylvania and we hope that you enjoy the coverage of Gary Baker Memorial Day on page 6. We know that you would love to have CoasterBash! held in the Blair County Convention Center’s ballroom with it’s 15,000 square feet of space full of all kinds of techy bells and whistles. Maybe someday, but for now, too many of our members are concerned about the possibility of winter weather during the drive over those mountains to Altoona!

Calendar of Regional Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE Phantom Fright Night</td>
<td>Kennywood</td>
<td>Friday, October 14, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACE Holiday Magic</td>
<td>Kennywood</td>
<td>Friday, December 2, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoasterBash! XXIII</td>
<td>Salvatore’s</td>
<td>Saturday, March 3, 2012</td>
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Two of Kennywood’s most well-known staff members were recently featured in prominent publications: Jeff Filicko was the subject of Amusement Today’s “Two Minute Drill” profile feature in the July issue, where among other things, we learned that the person he would like most like to have lunch with is Jimmy Buffet and his favorite amusement ride is the Bavarian Wave Swinger at night . . . Andy Quinn appeared in the August issue of Pittsburgh Magazine surrounded by some of the coolest items in the park’s archives, all of which included brief descriptions . . . congratulations to the following couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries: Dave and Maggie Altman (25 years), Ed and Mary Ann Jaram (20 years) and Jason and Shannon Eyer (5 years) . . . condolences to Tim Michalak, whose family’s dog passed away . . . congratulations to Joel Brewton who won third place in ACE’s annual Video Contest during Coaster Con XXXIV . . . congratulations to ACE Western Pennsylvania webmaster Tim Michalak for receiving the second place award in the Annual Regional Web Site Contest . . . Dave Madore may be from Maine, but his awesome picture of Kennywood’s Racer won second place in ACE’s annual Photo Contest . . . congratulations to Aaron Maricic who recently purchased his first house . . . after reaching 250 coasters on the New Texas Giant at Coaster Con XXXIV, 8-year old Michael Tkach rode his 300th coaster on Kennywood’s Thunderbolt during KennyKon XXII . . . a member of the Fun Team received a citation from the Arlington, Texas Police for his driving skills on I-20 between Arlington and Austin, Texas.

ACE Scandinavian Sojourn 2011

A dozen members from western Pennsylvania attended the ACE Scandinavian Sojourn in July, riding over 50 roller coasters at 12 parks as the tour wound its way through Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

ACE Western PA takes Gold!

The Hines Ward Mirror Ball team took first place at the Coaster Con XXXIV Midway Olympics! Members of the team posing with their gold medals are Val Lucas, Ryan Lucas, April Lucas, Dave Lucas and Maggie Altman.

ACE Western Pennsylvania conquers Texas!

During Coaster Con XXXIV in Texas in June, this group gathered for a private reception held exclusively for members from ACE Western Pennsylvania.

Michael Tkach’s 300th!

8-year old Michael Tkach rode his 300th coaster on Kennywood’s Thunderbolt during KennyKon XXII .

Congratulations to The Fun Times staff

Bill Linkenheimer III and Mike Matscherz pose with ACE regional representative director Robert Ulrich at Coaster Con XXXIV after accepting the plaque for third place in the Annual Regional Newsletter Contest.

Local ACEers conquer 400 at Coaster Con XXXIV

Mike Simone and Melinda Gaspari both achieved their 400th coaster at the same time on Steel Eel at SeaWorld San Antonio.
In honor of that anniversary, Phantom Phanatics were given the opportunity to compete in the Phantom’s Revenge Frequent Phanatic Contest to see who could ride the most times during the coaster’s first seven hours of operation (not counting ERT). Anyone who rode at least ten times was guaranteed a prize. It was a beautiful day for riding anything and everything! Not to be missed, of course, was the group photo in front of Phantom’s Revenge, taken at the end of ERT. Speaking of opportunities, ACEers also were invited to take photos within Sky Rocket’s structure during ERT. Kennywood’s newest coaster from Premier Rides has lost none of its speed and awesome airline since its opening in 2010.

Several other rides were celebrating important anniversaries, including 75 years for Noah’s Ark and 110 years for the Old Mill (now Garfield’s Nightmare). That’s a lot of years for one ride! So many attendees showed up for the ITOT on the carousel (to celebrate the 95th anniversary of its Wurlitzer band organ) that it took at least two rides to accommodate everyone. In Kiddieland, Lil’ Phantom marked its fifteenth year as well. As morning turned to afternoon, lines grew longer, as did waits for ITOTs on Jack Rabbit and Racer, two John Miller coasters that were designated ACE Roller Coaster Landmarks last year.

In addition to the ride anniversaries, several ACEers celebrated personal milestones during KennyKon XXII. Eight-year-old Michael Tkach’s ride on Thunderbolt was his 300th coaster! Brian and Pam Kanai’s not-quite-two-year-old daughter, April, attended her very first KennyKon, and Nikki Blake, after much arm-twisting from Mike Matscherz and Chase Fiore, took her first Sky Coaster ride — and lived to tell how much she loved it.

By late afternoon, everyone was getting hungry and thirsty, so it was time to finish up those rides on Phantom’s Revenge and head for Picnic Pavilion 19 for free soft drinks and an eventual meal of pork barbeque, chicken, pasta with marinara sauce, salad, baked beans, cole slaw and dessert. During the picnic supper, regional rep Bill Linkenheimer welcomed everyone and thanked the Greater Ohio Coaster Club (GOCC) for its co-sponsorship of KennyKon XXII. Bill introduced GOCC president, Cathy Schwab, who in turn introduced GOCC officers and thanked Bill for including GOCC in the event. On behalf of GOCC, Cathy presented Kennywood’s general manager, Jerome Gibas, with a plaque commemorating Phantom’s Revenge’s tenth anniversary.

Bill then introduced the regional rep team and other ACE volunteers who were present and gave the microphone to ACE president and assistant regional rep Dave Altman, who reminded attendees of upcoming ACE events. Dave also presented a plaque to former ACE Western Pennsylvania regional rep and former ACE regional rep director, Harry Sykes, for his 12 years of service on ACE’s executive committee. Bill also announced that the ACE Western Pennsylvania Web site won second place in the Regional Web Site Contest at the 2011 Coaster Con. He introduced Kennywood’s public relations manager, Jeff Flicko, who welcomed everyone and was available for any questions.

Time to tote up the rides and determine the winner of the Phantom’s Revenge Frequent Phanatic Contest, which turned out to be a tie! Both Phil Peavy III and Ken Riling squeezed in 15 rides before the 6:30 deadline, and their prize was an evening ride on Sky Coaster! Eleven people who had taken more than ten rides also received prizes. Lisa Corby, Gary Dickson and Melissa Cell won a behind-the-scenes tour of Garfield's Nightmare, in honor of the ride’s 110th anniversary.

Nightfall at Kennywood is a special time, with the darkness, cooler air, and neon and tracer lights on the rides turning the park into a world of color and contrasts. Before the ride operator caught on, experienced ACEers delighted in “humping the Turtle” during the evening’s ITOT on this T-bar classic ride, one of only two operating in the world, and both of them in western Pennsylvania parks. Behind-the-scenes tours of Noah’s Ark also took place in the evening, for those who had signed up earlier.

The evening ended with ERT on the John Miller/Andy Vettel Thunderbolt, a one-of-a-kind wood coaster that is always exciting, fun, and definitely re-ridable—not to mention an awesome night ride. All the trains were full, and all the riders were happy to end the day—if the day had to end — on this Kennywood treasure. Thanks to the ACE Western Pennsylvania regional rep team, Kennywood staff and volunteers who made this annual regional event the special day that it always is.
Kennywood’s Holiday Lights  
by Maggie Altman

Every year at the end of October or early November, the fun and excitement of Kennywood comes to an end but this will not occur this year. Kennywood will be open in December. Our dreams have come true! Christmas in July is favorable for store sales so why not for amusement parks?

On July 6, Kennywood announced to a gathering of children, friends and the media that Kennywood’s Holiday Lights will be held in December 2011. Santa, dressed in shorts and a flowered shirt, even took time out from his Hawaiian vacation to make an appearance for this special announcement.

Kennywood’s Holiday Lights will feature a light show around the lagoon featuring thousands and thousands of lights set to favorite Christmas songs. Even though most rides won’t be operating, guests can enjoy the Carousel, Kangaroo, Paratrooper, several rides in Kiddieland, and a holiday themed train ride on the Olde Kennywood Railroad.

What would a visit to Kennywood be without food? A delicious selection of tasty morsels will be available including kettle corn, s’mores, hot beverages and their famous Potato Patch fries.

Guests can participate in a variety of activities. They can decorate cookies, listen to choral groups, maybe even sing or hum along and write their Christmas wish list to Santa. If they have been good, kids of all ages can have their picture taken with the big guy.

The Kennywood elves have already been busy preparing for this extraordinary event. Several hints of Christmas can be found in the park. Have you noticed the Christmas packages in the Carousel Gardens, the gingerbread people and candy treats near Jack Rabbit and the decorated Christmas trees in the side window near the Penny Arcade? I’m sure the elves have many more surprises.

You can experience the excitement Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, December 2-4, 9-11 and 16-18 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Everyone has special memories at Christmas time, why not make Kennywood’s Holiday Lights a family tradition?

After a delicious dinner, a commemorative plaque was presented to Steve Gorman in honor of the Comet’s 60th anniversary. After the park closed to the public, we enjoyed an hour of ERT on Ravine Flyer II and Comet. A special treat was an unexpected launching of fireworks from the beach (at neighboring Presque Isle State Park) at 10 p.m. just as ERT was beginning!

And after getting as much rest as we could, it was off to KennyKon XXII, which began early the next morning.

Tony Colega is a great supporter of all of the region’s parks, including Waldameer, where he spotted a unique sign that read “Cotton Candy may be hard due to humidity!” Now that’s a sign you won’t find in Phoenix!
Gary Baker Memorial Day
Laughs, Joy, Remembrance
by David Hahner III

On October 15, 2009, ACE Western Pennsylvania lost a dedicated volunteer and friend, Gary Baker. Gary loved amusement parks like Kennywood and Lakemont Park and worked part-time at both parks as a ride operator over the years.

During the Allegheny Mountain Madness event on June 19, 2010, Lakemont Park general manager Barry Kumpf announced that one Saturday every July would be Gary Baker Memorial Day. This annual day would offer ACE members a free all-day ride-and-slide wristband to Lakemont Park. It also would give ACE Western Pennsylvania members a chance to bond and remember Gary Baker at one of his favorite places.

This year was the second annual Gary Baker Memorial Day and it sure was a hot one! Weather reached up to near 100 degrees and with few trees in the park to provide shade, the heat was definitely scorching! That didn’t stop ACEers from having a good time. The day started with an 11:30 a.m. Informal Take-Over Time (ITOT) on Skyliner, which was running really well. The next ITOT was on the train ride, the coolest ride of the day riding through some of the shadiest trees in the park.

Afterwards people headed to the park’s oldest attraction, Leap-the-Dips, the oldest roller coaster in the world. Although the ride seems to be getting a little rougher since it’s restoration in 1999, ACE members certainly didn’t mind as they were enjoying it regardless. Gary would certainly be proud, as he loved to operate this ride for members during Ridefest!

During lunch at The Diner refreshment stand, located near the Island Waterpark, there was a drawing for a 2011 Lakemont Park staff shirt. Val Lucas was the lucky winner! After lunch, an ITOT was scheduled for Train Town Mini Golf, but due to the extreme heat, only Dave, Ryan and April Lucas were brave enough (or was that crazy enough?) to challenge the course. Too bad other attendees didn’t want to join in as Gary loved to play mini golf!

Next, attendees had an ITOT on the park’s Tin Lizzy antique cars, followed by an additional unscheduled ITOT on Skyliner. The second annual Gary Baker Memorial Day came to an end with one last ITOT on the park’s Chance Toboggan coaster. Despite the heat, everyone had a great time. Some stayed at Lakemont Park until it closed at 9 p.m., some headed home and others traveled on to nearby DelGrosso’s Amusement Park, about 10 miles from Lakemont. Some even went to the Altoona Curve baseball game at the neighboring ballpark. Regardless, those who attended felt it was a fitting tribute to Gary Baker, all while having fun, of course! For the next couple days after the event, I could still hear Gary’s famous quotes buzzing through my head as people remembered and quoted his many sayings throughout the day. This event wasn’t just about having fun, but it was also saying, “We miss you, Gary.”
I’d like to start off by saying thank you for allowing me to step into the role of assistant regional rep. Like many others, I first heard of ACE through the many Discovery Channel specials way back in 1999 and was intrigued by the idea of joining a club that shared many of the same unique interests that I do. After joining, I got to know our regional reps very quickly. Many, with the first being Gary Baker, would just walk up to me, introduce themselves and welcome me to the club. Since then, I’ve met quite a few ACE members through the various events I’ve attended. Some of them I’ve become best friends with.

I encourage others, especially the newest of members, to get out and attend these events. And I also encourage you to think outside of the box. Well, maybe outside the Keystone. Even outside the country. I recently had the opportunity to travel overseas and attend ACE’s Scandinavian Sojourn this past July. It was an incredible experience spanning 11 days, four countries, 12 parks and a lot of really great coasters. I had first heard about the trip shortly after returning from the previous ACE overseas journey to Spain in 2009. Event organizers Kevin Schreiner and Ray Topscher did a phenomenal job with ACEspana and I was instantly interested in what they could have in store for Scandinavia. Sure enough, the Sojourn met and exceeded my expectations. To plan such an event, overseas nonetheless, must be a nightmare at times. A big kudos goes out to them.

But you don’t have to cross an ocean just to experience something new. Next year’s Coaster Con will feature the incredible Dollywood and the non-stop thrills of Carowinds. Both are excellent parks and will be made extra special considering that representatives from each department in Dollywood attended this year’s Coaster Con in Texas. They took detailed notes on the experience and plan on creating the best Con yet.

Thanks to all of the volunteers who make every event special and I hope to see all of my friends from ACE.
ACE Western Pennsylvania presents the tenth annual informal Fright Night event at Kennywood on Friday, October 14, 2011! Group discount tickets are available in advance for $23.00 each plus $1.00 per order (any number of tickets) to cover postage and handling. Checks are accepted from ACE members only, however, you can purchase as many tickets as you like, including tickets for non-members. Your order must be RECEIVED by October 8 to allow sufficient time for the tickets to be sent to you via first-class mail. Make your check or money order payable to Dave Altman. Along with your payment, clearly indicate how many tickets you desire and to what address they are to be sent. In addition, if you include your email address, upon receipt, an email confirmation will be sent to you.

Orders with payment should be sent to:
ACE Phantom Fright Night c/o Bill Linkenheimer
PO Box 15353
Pittsburgh, PA 15237-0553

Optional informal meeting times at roller coasters and haunted mazes will be arranged and included with ticket orders. For those of you who have your own Phantom Fright Night tickets or plan to purchase them for full price at the park that evening, you will receive the informal meeting time schedule via email, so long as you are on the ACE Western Pennsylvania regional email list. Please email eblast@ACEwesternPA.org with your name and preferred email address.

Also note that if you are unable to make the October 14th event, the discounted Phantom Fright Night tickets are valid for any night of the event during the 2011 season. Positively no refunds will be given on unused tickets.

ACE Western Pennsylvania celebrates Kennywood’s foray into December operation with an informal event to be held on the very first night of Kennywood’s Holiday Lights, also the very first day that the park has ever been open in this festive month.

There is no event registration. You can purchase tickets online in advance at Kennywood.com or at the gate. Once there, we encourage you to join your fellow members at some or all of these meeting times, including ITOTs (Informal Take Over Time) of rides. The tentative schedule is as follows:

6:30 p.m. Meet in front of Jack Rabbit to enjoy Holiday Lights show*
7 p.m. ITOT on Kangaroo
7:30 p.m. ITOT on the Polar Express (Olde Kennywood Railroad)
8 p.m. ITOT on Carousel
8:30 p.m. Meet in front of Jack Rabbit to enjoy Holiday Lights show* followed by fireworks!

*at the time of this printing, these shows are expected to be different from one another.

Please note that additional information and a final schedule will be communicated to members via email. If you aren’t on ACE Western Pennsylvania’s e-blast list, we welcome you to join it. Simply send an email to eblast@ACEwesternPA.org with your name and preferred email address.