



# The Fun Times

The FUNOFFICIAL Newsletter of ACE Western Pennsylvania

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February 2018

## KennyKon XXVIII: The Rain, the Park and Other Things\*

By Dave Altman

All photos by Joel Brewton

**The Rain:** It seems that in recent years that the KennyKon date is to West Mifflin like July 29 ("Rain Day") is to Brownsville, Pennsylvania (where it has rained for 115 of the last 144 years). However the rain, although causing temporary ride closures, also resulted in lighter crowds and short lines. Again, like last year, the heaviest rain coincided with the time of the picnic dinner, which minimized the impact on the attendees due to ride closures. Was this a coincidence or Divine Intervention since Rev. Cliff Herring attended both years?

**The Park:** Although the only new attraction in 2017 was "The LEGO Movie 4-D Experience!" the main draw for KennyKon is the coasters of which *Racer* was celebrating its 90th anniversary. In honor of this momentous

occasion, ACE was co-sponsoring the *Racer* Challenge in which the riders with the most rides on the "winning" train were awarded prizes by Kennywood including a 2018 season pass. Other rides celebrating their 90th anniversaries were the *Turtle*, *Whip* and *Merry-Go-Round*. Other notable ride milestones were the *Kangaroo* (the only remaining "Flying Coaster") at 55 years, *Pirate* (35 years), *Cosmic Chaos* (10 years) and *Black Widow* (5 years).

**Other Things:** There were 180 in attendance from 14 states and three foreign countries (Canada, the UK and Portugal). Among those were several individuals who were attending

their very first KennyKon and/or their first visit to Kennywood.

For the past six years, the region has conducted an Ice Cream for Breakfast fundraiser to benefit Give Kids the World during morning registration. Kennywood has graciously donated the ice cream each year and we collected \$218 this year bringing the six year total to \$1,384.

The morning ERT session consisted of both *Racer* and *Sky Rocket*, with a rare photo opportunity within the structure of the latter. To commemorate



the *Racer*'s anniversary, a special trainload was dispatched consisting of KennyKon attendees who had ridden either all three of the world's existing wooden single track racing coasters (Kennywood's

*Racer*, Blackpool Pleasure Beach's *Grand National* and *La Montana Rusa* in Mexico City) or the defunct *Racing Whippet* at West View Park in the Pittsburgh area. Three of the 20 attendees who met the above criteria had ridden all four of the aforementioned coasters.

After the morning ERT session, many took advantage of the short lines to ride or avoided the raindrops altogether by partaking of lunch and conversation in the Parkside Cafe or other indoor food venues. Informal Take Over Times (ITOTs) were scheduled throughout the afternoon on *Jack Rabbit* and the rides that were celebrating significant anniversaries.

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# CHATTER!

We are saddened to report that **Dominic Baragona**, the promoter who owned Mid America Events, which owned the popular Ghost Lake event that took place at Conneaut Lake Park each October, passed away in August after a brief bout with pancreatic cancer . . . congratulations to **Garrett Sauers**, who is continuing his college career at Point Park University . . . congratulations to **Dave Lucas**, who retired in January . . . condolences to **Garrett Sauers** on the very recent passing of his grandfather, who provided him with his first Kennywood season pass and first ACE membership . . . get well wishes are extended to **John Gasper**, who had back surgery in January . . . congratulations to **Bryan Bartley**, who retired as Kennywood's head of the rides maintenance department after the first of the year . . . congratulations to **Ryan Quinn** (son of **Andy Quinn**) who has been promoted to Kennywood's maintenance department manager . . . congratulations to **Geno Chamboredon**, who has taken the role of Kennywood's maintenance department administrator, responsible for such things as scheduling, ordering and part/inventory "You okay, Geno?" . . .

## CALENDAR OF REGIONAL EVENTS

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

### CoasterBash! XXIX

Saturday, March 3, 2018  
Salvatores

### KennyKon XXIX

Saturday, July 21, 2018  
Kennywood

### Flying High with a Blue Streak

Saturday & Sunday  
August 25-26, 2018

Conneaut Lake Park (Sat.)  
Waldameer & Water World (Sun.)

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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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Hello and welcome to the winter issue of *The Fun Times*. Last year, our region followed changes that ACE made at the national level and ceased mailing event flyers, instead choosing to have them available online only. The events and where to look for information continues to be promoted through ACE Western Pennsylvania emails, ACE Western Pennsylvania social media outlets and on the prominent back page of this newsletter.

Beginning with the upcoming CoasterBash! XXIX event, our region continues to follow the lead of the national events. While full-fledged flyers for some events will continue to be created, all of the pertinent information will now be available on a web page created for each event. This change will allow those members using mobile devices to more easily view the event information, as opposed to clumsily scrolling around their screen using a pdf file viewer. It will likewise provide a good experience for those using traditional desktop and laptop computers. Also, the events that occur annually will use the same URL from year to year, so members will ultimately know right where to go for information. For instance, [ACEwesternPA.org/coasterbash](http://ACEwesternPA.org/coasterbash). See you in the queues!

*Matt*

## KennyKon XXVIII: The Rain, the Park and Other Things\*

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As the appointed time for dinner approached, attendees headed for Pavilion 22 near Log Jammer. After the invocation by Rev. Cliff Herring, ACE Western Pennsylvania Regional Representative Bill Linkenheimer III gave his opening



remarks and asked that those attending Kennywood for the first time or attending their first KennyKon to stand up.

Bill then introduced the park's general manager, Jerome Gibas, who announced that due to the light crowd, the park would be closing at 9 p.m. However, the rain would end within the hour and the evening ERT on *Phantom's*

*Revenge* would begin shortly after the park's closing.

The heaviest rain of the day coincided with the serving of the picnic dinner consisting of hot sausage, penne pasta, smoked beef brisket, baked beans, potato salad, fresh fruit salad and macaroni & cheese. Following dinner, everyone was treated to slices of wedding cake courtesy of Pam and Brian Kanai who had celebrated their 10th anniversary earlier in the day on the *Jack*

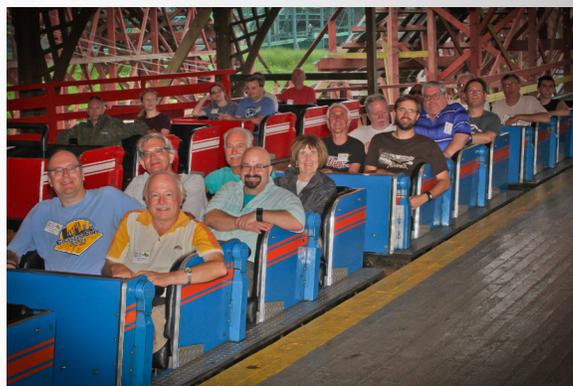


*Rabbit* station. Rev. Cliff Herring officiated at the reenactment of their wedding vows and also those of Dave and Terry Hahner who had celebrated their 25th anniversary that year.

Bill Linkenheimer returned to the microphone to announce the rescheduled evening ITOT times (on Grand Prix and Turtle) and to recognize ACE's officers, directors, managers, committee members and other volunteers as well as the regional rep team in the audience. Kennywood Director of Public Relations Nick Paradise then presented Bill Linkenheimer Jr. with his Golden Kenny award, which was announced at CoasterBash! XXXVIII, but not available during the event.



The traditional evening ERT session for KennyKon is on *Phantom's Revenge*. However, shortly after beginning, an uncharacteristic noise was heard from one of the trains as it ascended the lift hill and traversed the bunny hops alongside the station. A ten minute delay was announced as maintenance was called and the mechanics quickly replaced a broken wheel. The ERT session concluded without further incident and friends bid goodbye to each other until the next KennyKon or other ACE event.



\*Epilogue: For those familiar with the lyrics of The Cowsills' 1967 hit single (part of this article's title), "The Flower Girl" is actually believed to be a reference to the design on Marty Moltz's colorful shirt.

# ACE and WNYCC Fly High in 2017

By Tim Michalak

All photos by Sarah Windisch

The weekend started at Conneaut Lake Park on Saturday, August 26. The weather was perfect and the park was really hopping. Some members got together and played a fun-filled round of miniature golf. There were many rides to be had and lots of fun on one of the last two operating -- and the fastest -- Tumble Bugs in the world. Then there was Devil's Den with every trick functioning and the entire ride looking great. There were even some new updated tricks that surprised riders.



At dinner, attendees were treated to spaghetti and meatballs, salad, cake, cookies and soft drinks. After dinner, Conneaut Lake Park Manager Matt Briggs had a few announcements and informed those in attendance that the park's back taxes had been paid off, attendance is up, revenue is up and things are looking good once again for the park. There was an after dinner train ride which included some rather creative theming. Of course no trip to Conneaut Lake Park is complete without ERT on the park's ACE Roller Coaster Landmark coaster *Blue Streak*. There was a lot of new wood on *Blue Streak*, and you could tell not only by looking at it, but also by riding it. The ride was running smoother and better than ever!



Day two began at 10 a.m. at Waldameer and Water World with registration at the Lakeside Pavilion which included donuts and coffee. At 11 a.m. attendees were treated to ERT on the park's Comet coaster.

At noon, as some of the rides began to open, those in attendance were treated to ERT on the *Steel Dragon* coaster. At 1 p.m. the group gathered for lunch in the Lakeside Pavilion for an all-you-could-eat buffet of hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken strips, baked beans, macaroni and potato salads, chips, ice cream and soft drinks. Some of those in attendance took advantage of a tip from one of the buffet attendants who suggested putting chicken strips and BBQ sauce on their hamburger. The verdict: The BBQ Chicken Strip Burger, a new food sensation that is sure to take amusement parks across the country by storm!

During lunch ACE Western Pennsylvania Regional Representative Bill Linkenheimer III, Western New York Coaster Club's Geoff Ford and Waldameer President Steve Gorman, each said a few words and thank yous. There was a small raffle of some great collectible items from some of the park's coasters and "Waldameer Mystery Files" fictional books authored by David Gorman, Steve Gorman's son.

After lunch and a few rides on the park's classic collection of flat rides, as well as Wacky Shack and Pirates Cove, some of those in attendance took a behind-the-scenes tour under the structure of the *Ravine Flyer II* which featured some great photo opportunities and a tour of the coaster's motor room. As the day went on those in attendance enjoyed more of Waldameer's great attractions, such as the Sky Ride, and a trip on the park's train, the L. Ruth Express. As evening approached and the sky began to darken, there was no better way to finish the night than with ERT on *Ravine Flyer II*, which remains one of the top 10 wood coasters in the world and that certainly holds true at night!

Thanks to Conneaut Lake Park, Waldameer Park and the Western New York Coaster Club for another great event!



# An FEC Fiesta at Fun Fore All

By Brett Weissbart

On the eve of KennyKon, dozens of ACE and NAPHA members braved construction-fueled traffic to return to Fun Fore All for the first time since CoasterCon XXXIII. Fun Fore All management graciously offered attendees fun cards at almost half price, granting everyone unlimited access to the facility's two miniature golf courses, go-karts, bumper boats, batting cages, pint-sized rides and the brand new XD Dark Ride.

Because Lakemont Park was closed for the summer, the annual Gary Baker Memorial Mini Golf Tournament was held over the course of the evening. Members made their way through the challenging golf courses at their leisure and submitted their scores at the end of their rounds. After the scorecards were tallied, Harry Sykes and Rick

Davis were crowned victors and received gift cards generously provided by Fun Fore All.

After 18 holes of golf, many attendees found their way to the park's other attractions.

The bumper boats proved to be a soaking affair, and the go-karts were popular all night long among visitors who didn't get their speed fix driving up I-79 earlier in the evening. The XD Dark Ride was a surprise hit as guests exchanged their golf clubs for blaster guns to fight werewolves and zombies.

As the festivities wrapped up, lightning began to light up the sky. It wouldn't be a KennyKon weekend without a little precipitation! ACE and NAPHA members are grateful that the weather held for an evening of fun and friends, and appreciate the hospitality of Fun Fore All for making it all possible.



Photo by Sarah Windisch



Photo by Dave Hahner

# Fall Event Wrap-Up

Each fall, ACE Western Pennsylvania holds a number of informal events to celebrate the various seasonal events held at Kennywood and Conneaut Lake Park. Despite not requiring registration, members often receive discounted admission, ERT and exclusive tours and experiences. Keep an eye on ACEwesternPA.org and @ACEwesternPA on social media for details on this year's events! -Brett Weissbart

## ACE Fall Fantasy - August 6

ACE members are invited by Kennywood each year to ride in the trolley in the Fall Fantasy parade. In 2017, members enjoyed gorgeous weather (what a refreshing change!) as they met up for informal ride takeovers in the afternoon before riding with the parade.

Photo by Joel Brewfton



## ACE Ghost Lake - October 20

Attendees received discounted admission to face the park's "13 levels of fear." A trek through 12 scare zones and haunted houses culminated with a pitch-black ride on Blue Streak.

Photo by Sarah Windisch



Photo by Sarah Windisch



Photo by Sarah Windisch

# Fall Event Wrap-Up

## ACE-DAFE Phantom Fright Night - October 21

Kennywood always rolls out the red carpet for ACE members during Phantom Fright Nights, and 2017 was no exception. In addition to providing discounted admission, attendees were granted early entry into the park to ride *Sky Rocket*, optionally with the VR experience which is typically an upcharge. Members also got to ride *Skeleton Station*, which is the Olde Kennywood railroad dressed up for Halloween and only open to the public during Happy Hauntings. Finally, members formed groups and got to try their luck at the park's new escape room, also for free!

Photo by Stephen Gray



Photo by Sarah Windisch

## ACE Holiday Magic - November 26

Dozens of ACE members and their guests were invited to a photo walkback of *Thunderbolt* and *Phantom's Revenge* from a perspective never seen by the general public. Pictures abounded as attendees enjoyed the vistas of the two coasters and the ravine. Afterwards, millions of lights dazzled as members took in the sights and sounds of Kennywood's Holiday Lights.

Photo by Joel Brewton



Photo by Brett Weissbart

# COASTERBASH!

## XXIX

Saturday, March 3, 2018  
Salvatore's  
Pittsburgh's South Hills

Find all of the information that you need including schedule, pricing and a link to print a mail-in registration form at [ACEwesternPA.org/coasterbash](http://ACEwesternPA.org/coasterbash)

Register online at  
[www.ACEwesternpa.org/registration](http://www.ACEwesternpa.org/registration)

**NO PRINTED EVENT FLYER  
WILL BE MAILED!**

The longest-running regional no-coaster event is back for its 29th year. This year's event will have a plethora of presenters including book authors and several park representatives. Visit the CoasterBash! web page for continually updated details!

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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