FALL 2013 THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN COASTER ENTHUSIASTS RC! 127

# ROLLERCOASTER!




## Coaster Con XXXVI

VOLUME XXXV, ISSUE 1 $8 AmericanCoasterEnthusiasts.org

# THE BACK SEAT



PHOTO COURTESY TIM BALDWIN COLLECTION

Author Mike Thompson had the enviable task of covering this year's Coaster Con for this issue. It must have been not only a delight to capture an extraordinary convention in words, but also a source of pride as it is occurred in his very region. However, what a challenge for him to try to capture a week that seemed to surpass mere words into an article that conveyed the amazing experience of Coaster Con XXXVI.

I remember a week filled with a level of hospitality taken to a whole new level, special perks in terms of activities and tours, and quite simply…perfect weather. The fact that each park had its own charm and character made it a magnificent week — one that truly exemplifies what Coaster Con is all about and why many people make it the can't-miss event of the year.

Recent discussion among our ***RollerCoaster!*** staff mentioned the specially made playing cards customized for ACE members and Coaster Con XXXVI. It was this continuous attention to detail and creativity that moved Six Flags New England into an upper echelon of hospitality that will be difficult to match. As I exited the park that first Sunday night I was impressed (very impressed, to say the least) to see an entire street full of park management lining the way to the gate, thanking us for coming and saying goodnight. Thank you, Six Flags. It's nice to know that experienced veterans such as myself can still have our socks knocked off.




**Tim Baldwin, Editor, *RollerCoaster!***
**tbaldwin@ACEonline.org**

# IN THE INBOX

Today I found the new ***RollerCoaster!*** in my postbox. It has my favorite park, the one I grew up with, as its cover story. The first thing I did was read it, even before taking off my shoes.

It is great to see that you liked Phantasialand that much. I very much enjoyed your view of the park. If you visit parks very often, sometimes several times a year (since it's just an hour drive for me), novelty wears off a bit. So it is nice to see the park through the eyes of someone other than the regular visitors.

Phantasialand was the first amusement park I visited when I was five years old in 1974. *Gebirgsbahn* was my first roller coaster a few years later in 1978.

Two themed dark rides aren't mentioned in the article: the Geister Rikscha in China Town — a kind of ghost train which is a bit inspired by Haunted Mansion (with a ride system by Schwarzkopf) and the Hollywood Tour — a boat ride through several film scenes. The ride system of Silbermine is by Schwarzkopf as well.

Thank you very much for the article and for making Phantasialand known to a wider international audience.

I just joined ACE this year. Next year during the first two weeks of June I'll be doing a U.S. trip from Houston to Atlanta. It would be great to meet some fellow enthusiasts.

**Best greetings from Hagen, Germany,**
**STEFAN SCHEER**

*Welcome aboard, Stefan! We hope you enjoy your experience in ACE and have the opportunities to meet some members during your U.S. tour. Thanks for mentioning Schwarzkopf. During my preparation for the article, one of your fellow German enthusiasts mentioned a Schwarzkopf website dedicated to the coaster designer we all love. Michael Pantenburg oversees Schwarzkopf Coaster Net. ACE members might enjoy checking it out at: www.schwarzkopf-coaster.net*

Just read your excellent piece on Phantasialand in ***RC!* 126**. Made me realize that it's been far too long since I visited there.

**MARTIN VALT**
**U.K. Regional Rep**
**Sandbach, England**

I just finished reading ***RC!* 126**. I LOVE articles like Jan Rush's "Coasting in the U.S." that discover the little out-of-the way places. Anyone who likes this article would have really enjoyed a presentation that Jim Futrell gave at ACE Western Pennsylvania's CoasterBash! event a few years ago on "10 parks you've never heard of." I look forward to Part 2!

**BILL LINKENHEIMER III**
**ACE Regional Representative**
**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

*Editor's Note: A few ACE members contacted author Torrence Jenkins to say that there was an error in his article stating that Morgan trains replaced three-bench PTC trains on* Texas Cyclone, *believing the coaster operated with four-bench trains. Actually, the article is correct.* Texas Cyclone *did open with four-bench PTCs, but the four-bench trains took their toll on the track and were eventually replaced with three-bench PTCs.* RollerCoaster! *issue # 89, Spring 2004, has photos of the three-bench trains that ran on the woodie prior to the arrival of the Morgan trains, as well as a photo of the original four-bench trains. Photos of the three- and four-bench PTC trains can also be viewed from the online census links on RCReride.com. It is marvelous that we have so many detail-oriented members who keep our history alive!*


***RollerCoaster!* 127 • FALL 2013**
Editor: Tim Baldwin
Managing Editor: Jeffrey Seifert
Photo Editor: Tim Baldwin

Associate Editors:
Bill Linkenheimer III, Elaine Linkenheimer,
Jan Rush, Lisa Scheinin

***RollerCoaster!*** (ISSN 0896-7261) is published quarterly by American Coaster Enthusiasts Worldwide, Inc., a non-profit organization, at 1100-H Brandywine Blvd., Zanesville, OH 43701.

Subscription: $32.00 for four issues ($37.00 Canada and Mexico, $47 elsewhere). Periodicals postage paid at Zanesville, OH, and an additional mailing office.

Back issues: RCReride.com and click on back issues.

***RollerCoaster!*** subscriptions are part of the membership benefits for American Coaster Enthusiasts. ***RollerCoaster!*** is printed for American Coaster Enthusiasts by Knepper Press Corporation; graphic design by Terrence L. Lind/TL Creative Design.

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
American Coaster Enthusiasts
1100-H Brandywine Blvd.,
Zanesville, OH 43701

Please contact the editor before e-mailing any unsolicited digital photographs. Send all other submissions for publication, including editorial letters to:

Tim Baldwin
3508 Pecos Way
Grand Prairie, TX 75052
tbaldwin@ACEonline.org

Send all advertising inquiries to:
Sean Torres
6420 E. Tropicana Avenue #80
Las Vegas, NV 89074
storres@ACEonline.org



Copyright 2013 by American Coaster Enthusiasts. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage retrieval system, without written permission of the copyright owner. The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of American Coaster Enthusiasts.



AMERICAN COASTER ENTHUSIASTS

AmericanCoasterEnthhusiasts.org

Recycled Paper

PRINTED WITH SOY INK



**OFFICERS**
President: Dave Altman
Vice President: Jerry Willard
Secretary: Susan Shick
Treasurer: Cheri Armstrong
Immediate Past President: Mark Cole

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
Archivist: Terry Lason
Census Director: Scott Short
Events Director: Paul Blick
Historian: Dave Hahner
Information Services Director: Brian Peters
Legal Affairs Director: Al Wolsky
Merchandise Director: Stacey Smilek
Preservation Director: Howard Gillooly
Publications Director: Lee Ann Draud
Public Relations Director: David Lipnicky
Regional Representative Director: Robert Ulrich
Registration Director: Steve Smith

**PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**
***RollerCoaster!*** Editor: Tim Baldwin
ACE News Editor: Mike Thompson
Advertising Manager: Sean Torres

# CONTENTS

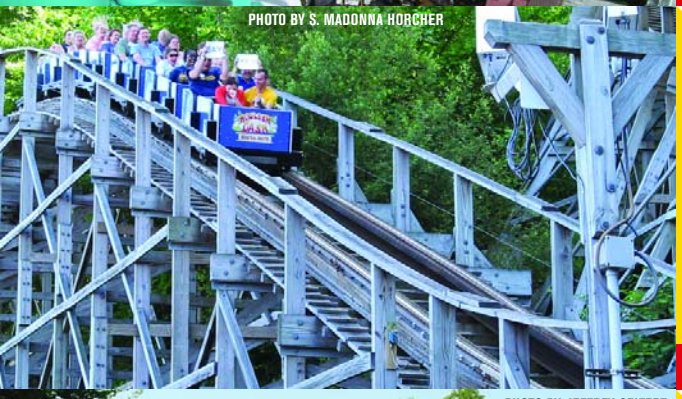
ROLLERCOASTER!
FALL 2013 RC!127 VOLUME XXXV, ISSUE 1 $8

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND 4

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



BOULDER DASH 22

PHOTO BY JEFFREY SEIFERT



POLAR COASTER 33

PHOTO BY LISA SCHEININ



BATTLESTAR GALACTICA 38

"[*Bizarro/Superman*] is not done evolving. Technology and creative integration will allow it to morph and continue entertaining thrill seekers for many years to come. My goal is to put the "S" back on it. Stay tuned!"

—JOHN WINKLER, PRESIDENT, SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND

PAGE 4

## FEATURES

**4 COASTER CON XXXVI – EXCEEDING ALL EXPECTATIONS**
From "lobstah" to clam "chowdah," **Mike Thompson** recounts the spectacular New England-style hospitality extended to attendees of Coaster Con XXXVI.

**22 PRE-CON IN CON-NECTICUT**
Even before Coaster Con started, the fun was already getting under way, as reported by **Tim Baldwin**.

**26 FROM GALLUP'S GROVE TO SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND – MORE THAN A CENTURY AND A HALF OF FUN**
Although now known as Six Flags New England, the park has a rich history that dates back more than 100 years before Six Flags was even conceived. **Dave Hahner** chronicles the park's century-spanning transition.

**33 NEW ENGLAND'S TWO CHILDREN'S PARK GEMS**
**Donna Piper** highlights two treasures that may not be very well known outside of her region.

**38 THE COASTERS OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE – PART 2: MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE**
**Lisa Scheinin** concludes her account of the coasters and parks in these two countries in Southeast Asia.

## DEPARTMENTS

**19 INDUSTRY PROFILE**
Meet Six Flags New England's Park President **John Winkler**.

**18, 25 GROUP PHOTOS 2013 COASTER CON**
By **S. Madonna Horcher**.

**20 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS**

**FRONT COVER**
***Bizarro***
Six Flags New England
PHOTO BY RICHARD KOPPELMAN



**BACK COVER**
***Untamed***
Canobie Lake Amusement Park
PHOTO BY RICHARD KOPPELMAN



COASTERCONXXXVI

# Coaster Con XXXVI

## Exceeding All Expectations

by Mike Thompson

PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN

CYCLONE



Kids got their own banquet in 2013.

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



ACE was fed like never before at Coaster Con XXXVI.

PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN




PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



*Registration – the excitement buzz to kick off the week.*



*ACE General Store*

Every year for the past several years, ACE Events Director Paul Blick and the ACE Events Committee have carefully selected Coaster Con host parks and worked with them diligently to provide attendees with memorable week-long events that are worth every penny. At Silver Dollar City in 2009, hospitality reached a level that ACE had never seen before, and the quality, uniqueness and variety of food options were deliciously stupendous. In 2010, Kennywood continued with the wonderful fare, which included an opening night reception featuring local flavor. The park even made sure that every ACEer had an opportunity to ride the new-for-2010 *Sky Rocket*, which hadn't yet opened to the public. Six Flags Over Texas and their amazing Public Relations Director Sharon Parker rolled out the southern hospitality, the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders and, of course, *New Texas Giant* in 2011. At Dollywood in 2012, the Herschend Family Entertainment hospitality was evident once again, just as it had been at sister park Silver Dollar City. Plus, the nearly 650 ACEers in attendance got to ride *Wild Eagle*, which was new that year, to their hearts' content. And one cannot forget that it was entertainment legend Dolly Parton herself who welcomed ACE at a private mountaintop feast and concert during the opening night reception.




PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

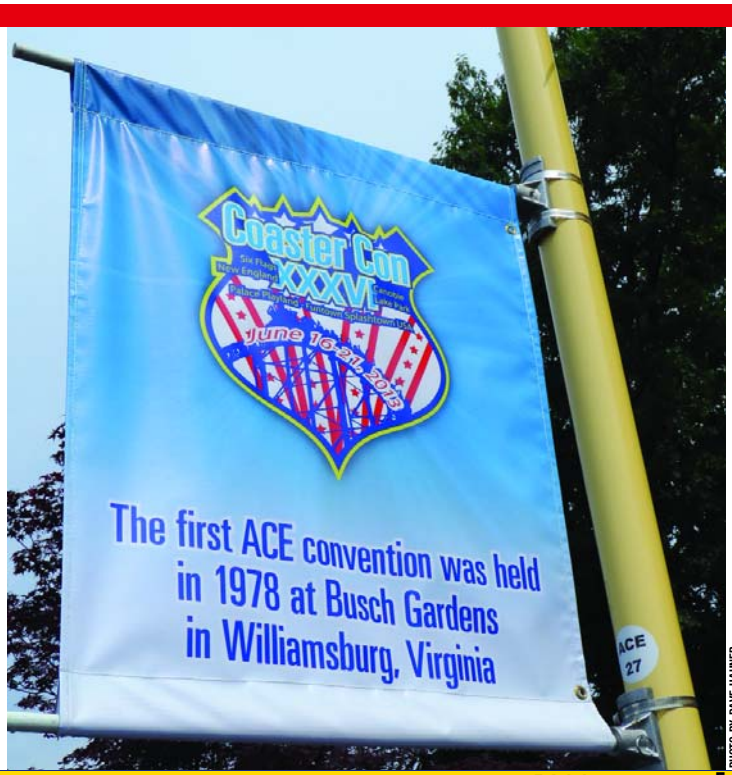



PHOTO BY DAVE HANNER

After the amazing Cons leading up to 2013's Coaster Con XXXVI, people wondered how on earth Six Flags New England (SFNE) and the other New England host parks (Canobie Lake Park, Palace Playland and Funtown Splashtown USA) could possibly top what had come before. Would they even try? None of the four host parks even had a new coaster to show off. With the help of many and to the surprise of many more, Coaster Con XXXVI far exceeded all expectations.

Knowing that nearly 400 ACEers would be descending upon the area on Sunday, June 16, ACE New England Regional Rep Rus Ozana wisely started planning a June 15 regional event almost a year in advance with nearby Quassy Amusement Park (Middlebury, Connecticut) and Lake Compounce (Bristol, Connecticut). The strategy paid off, as 80% of the Coaster Con attendees also attended Pre-Con in Con-necticut, where many got their first rides ever on Quassy's delightful *Wooden Warrior* and Compounce's thrilling *Boulder Dash*. Both wood coasters were running incredibly well and gained many new fans that day. The event had the highest attendance ever for an ACE New England regional event.

Prior to that Sunday's Coaster Con registration, some out-of-towners also paid a visit to Playland in Rye, New York. With news that Sustainable Playland — the company that eventually won the bid for the park's management contract — might remove half the rides from the classic park, many ACEers wanted to visit Playland again (or for the first time) in its current state before any changes are made.

Registration at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel went smoothly. While at the host hotel in downtown Springfield, Massachusetts, ACE members were able to check out the ACE General Store, claim a banquet table, pick up brochures for local attractions at the hospitality table, submit photos for the ACE Photo Contest and sign up their teams for the Midway Olympics. For the first time ever, there was a kids-only Midway Olympics at Coaster Con, in addition to the regular version. Okay, maybe an event where Marty Moltz trots down the midway with a toilet plunger as the Olympic flame shouldn't be described as "regular," but you get the drift. That Sunday afternoon was also a good time to take a nap before the whirlwind of official Coaster Con activities began that evening.

Six Flags New England let everyone know (before ACE even set foot inside the park) that it was taking Coaster Con seriously. Specially made banners, each with a different ACE or SFNE fact, hung on the pedestrian bridge that connects the parking lot to the ticket plaza. Attendees would soon learn that there were 25 different banners hanging throughout the park.

SFNE's secluded Rivers Edge Picnic Grove was the perfect place for the opening ceremony and welcome dinner. Where Dollywood provided the world's most famous boobs to greet Coaster Con attendees, SFNE showed off a little ass. An animal trainer named Franklin, along with Alfred, his miniature donkey, joined the Looney Tunes characters and a magician to greet and entertain ACEers as they lined up for dinner.

The reception dinner was where the attendees from 33 states, three Canadian provinces,

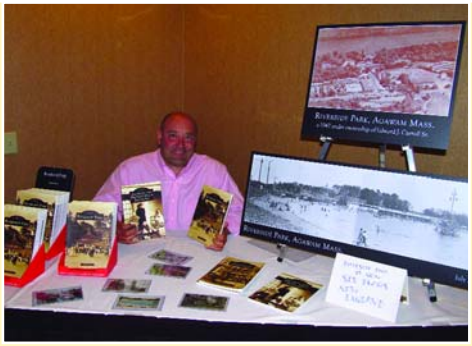


PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER




PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER




PHOTO BY DAVID LIPNICKY

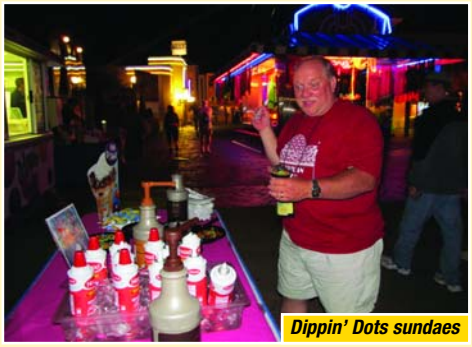


PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

Dippin' Dots sundaes



PHOTO BY ALAN SHICK



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER




Work done by ACEers creates a Six Flags historical exhibit.

PHOTO BY MIKE MATSCHERZ

PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN



PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN



Fifty thrilled attendees got a specially arranged helicopter tour around the park.




PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

**BIZARRO**



PHOTO BY ALAN SHICK

COASTERCON XXXVI

## BIZARRO



PHOTO BY ADRIAN LLOYD

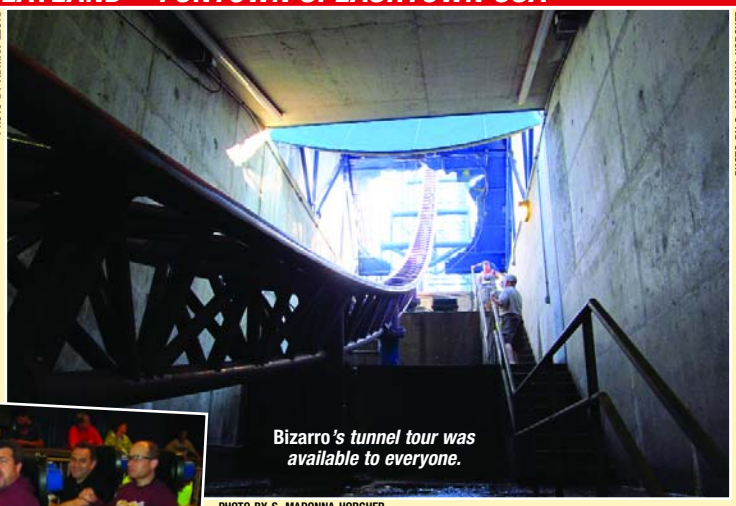


PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

Bizarro's *tunnel tour was available to everyone.*



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



Goliath *was a no-show for Coaster Con as the park worked through some issues with the train.*

PHOTO BY HOWARD GILLOOLY



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

## THUNDERBOLT



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

Thunderbolt – *an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark.*




PHOTO BY ALAN SHICK




PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN


PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

CATWOMAN'S WHIP



PHOTO BY RODNEY BOORSE

GOTHAM CITY GAUNTLET ESCAPE FROM ARKHAM ASYLUM


PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN

Many attendees lucked into a tasty hands-on fudge tour.


PHOTO BY DAVID HAHNER



PHOTO BY DAVID HAHNER

France and Australia started to notice that this was no ordinary Coaster Con. The meal consisted of a choice of steak, chicken or lobster. Yes, lobster! What a way to welcome visitors to New England! The next pavilion over contained the ACE Lounge, where ACE members could rest on comfortable couches and purchase beer and wine. Since every Coaster Con attendee without a Six Flags season pass received one with their registration, SFNE set up a processing center in the pub area for ACE's convenience.

SFNE Park President John Winkler and Melanie Smith, SFNE's tour and travel representative, welcomed everyone to Coaster Con XXXVI, as did ACE President Dave Altman and Paul Blick. Live entertainment came in the form of a preview of the park's animal show and singer/musician John Bressler. For many the highlight of the evening wasn't the delectable meal, the abundant door prizes, the relaxing pub or the adorable donkey. An ACE sing-along of Old MacDonald, complete with volunteers dressed as barnyard animals, had the crowd in hysterics. It's certainly nothing that Blick will soon forget. Oink! Oink!

Once SFNE closed to the public at 9 p.m., ACE had ERT in the entire DC Super Hero Adventures section of the park plus *Thunderbolt* — an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark. *Bizarro*, formerly known as *Superman Ride of Steel*, is regarded as one of the best steel roller coasters in the world. Quite a few ACE members got their first rides on it that night during ERT, with some die-hards riding more than a dozen times. Breaking away from line-free laps on *Bizarro* wasn't easy. The ACE Photo Contest was housed in its best location ever — the Hall of Justice. If that cool fact plus ERT on *Thunderbolt, Catwoman's Whip* and *Gotham City Gauntlet* were not enough enticement to take a break from those heavenly night rides on *Bizarro*, then perhaps the Dippin' Dots sundaes with all the toppings did the trick.

By the time ACE cleared out of SFNE late Sunday night, it was impossible not to be impressed with the park's efforts and hospitality. But it wouldn't end after just one night. That feeling would continue for the three days that followed. The surprises, terrific food, ERT and fun just kept coming.

One thing that sets a Coaster Con apart from an everyday visit to a park is the special behind-the-scenes tours that are provided. And Coaster Con XXXVI featured the mother lode of tours at Six Flags New England. Every attendee won the opportunity to partake in at least one or more of the ten that were offered. Some got to tour Cold Stone Creamery or the fudge shop and see how delicious confections are made before making some for themselves. Some climbed down into *Bizarro*'s two tunnels or went underneath Houdini — The Great Escape's revolving room — to see how it operates. Photo tours of *Thunderbolt*'s and *Cyclone*'s off-limits infield areas were available. Halloween haunts were explored and a makeup demonstration was given in the Fright Fest Woods. But the tour that left everyone in awe wasn't a behind-the-scenes tour; it was an above-the-scenes tour of the entire park. In a helicopter! More than 50 lucky ACEers won a helicopter ride in which they circled high above the park.

Monday morning at SFNE started at the crack of dawn for those participating in some of the

special tours. Breakfast and morning ERT on the rides and coasters at the park's north end, including *Cyclone, Flashback, Pandemonium, Great Chase* and Blizzard River, were followed by the group photo near *Bizarro* prior to the general public's arrival at 10:30 a.m. By that time, many ACEers had already been having fun in the park for four hours.

Lunch was a delicious and bountiful Mexican buffet, with churros for dessert. Two Monday afternoon items that were on the itinerary left many puzzled until they were explained during lunch. The Brain Freeze Contest on Main Street pitted ACEers against one another in an attempt to eat an entire frozen lemonade the fastest and win a gift card. Christian Blick blew away the competition. What followed was a Group Freeze Dance, which was a flash mob in which everyone stood motionless during a song while looking at the new ACE color brochure. The idea was that curious park guests would then wonder what everyone was looking at on Main Street and ask about ACE. Participants thought it was great fun.

A unique Six Flags New England/ACE Museum was created by ACE Historian Dave Hahner, Mike Matscherz and SFNE for everyone to peruse during the four days at the park. It contained a timeline of general roller coaster milestones and those specific to SFNE, plus numerous ride vehicles and props from the park.

Monday evening's Hurricane Harbor ERT and luau dinner featured numerous highlights. After Hurricane Harbor closed to the public, the entire south end of SFNE's Hurricane Harbor waterpark was kept open just for ACE. Food stations offering Polynesian delights such as pork ribs, Lanai roasted chicken, pineapple mango stuffed pork loin and pineapple cake lined a poolside walkway. With the option of doing the water slides or chowing down at the luau, the group was split, resulting in few to no lines for any of the attractions or buffet tables. Those who dared to experience the new-for-2013 Bonzai Pipelines quickly discovered that the new water slides pack as big of an adrenaline rush as any roller coaster. Bonzai Pipelines are intense and terrifying, to say the least. The Typhoon Water Coaster provided plenty of coaster-like action as well, without the normal midday hour-long wait. Themed entertainment was provided by Hukelau, a Polynesian band complete with dancers and flame twirlers.

When 9 p.m. rolled around and the luau ended, it was hard to believe that the night was just getting started. With full stomachs, leis around their necks and some hula in their step, the attendees exited Hurricane Harbor for nighttime ERT on the attractions in and around Crackaxle Canyon. Both wood coasters, *Pandemonium*, Houdini, Tomahawk and Stampede Bumper Cars provided plenty of nighttime thrills, while multiple snack options and free sodas gave everyone the sustenance they needed to make it until 11 p.m — as if they hadn't been stuffed at the luau. Not surprisingly, the longest line of the night was at Cold Stone Creamery, where a vast selection of free ice cream was available. A noticeable no-show during the week was *Goliath*, the Giant Inverted Boomerang coaster in the heart of Crackaxle Canyon that SFNE installed in 2012. The original train had been replaced by a new, prototype train, which was unable to run successfully on

**PANDEMONIUM**




PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

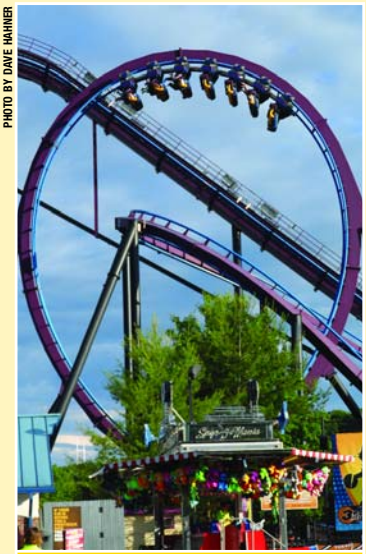


PHOTO BY DAVE HAHNER

**BATMAN THE DARK KNIGHT**

**FLASHBACK**



PHOTO BY HOWARD GILLOOLY




PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

SFNE's Pete Carmichael rides with Abby Tilsley.

Pete Carmichael, John Winkler and Melanie Smith accept the host plaque from President Dave Altman.




PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN






PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN



PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN




*Hurricane Harbor made for a great location for a specially-produced ACE luau.*

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER





PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

Midway Olympics



PHOTO BY SARAH WINDISCH



PHOTO BY DAVE HAHNER

ACE participated in a "freeze mob" with attendees frozen on the midway.



A summer walk-through of Fright Fest trails.

PHOTO BY DAVE HAHNER



Brain Freeze contest

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

the track. The park was still in the process of getting the old train up and running again. Although sharp-eyed ACEers occasionally saw *Goliath* testing, it would not be inspected until days after that portion of Coaster Con had ended.

Tuesday began with more early morning tours, followed by a full, hot breakfast and Midway Olympics in SFNE's Rockville section. Fourteen teams competed for medals by playing 10 different midway games for points. The first-ever Kids Midway Olympics was enjoyed by nearly a dozen young ACEers attending Coaster Con with their supportive families. And while the adults and bigger kids rode *Batman The Dark Knight*, *Mind Eraser* and several flat rides in the park's south end during ERT, there was a special Kids ERT in the Kidzopolis area of SFNE. The wide variety of ride and entertainment offerings for every age group at Coaster Con was a true testament that the organizers of the annual event wanted to make sure that everyone had fun and that no one was left out. It was a gesture that was greatly appreciated by not only families with small children, but other ACEers as well. Numerous attendees thanked Blick afterward for including such activities.

Much too soon it was time for another delicious and filling lunch in the picnic grove. There were more door prizes to be won and dozens of silent auction items to bid on, including a sign in the shape of the Coaster Con XXXVI logo, which ultimately sold for $500. Following the meal, the afternoon was filled with back-to-back-to-back agenda items in SFNE's Rockville Theatre, the kind that can only be found at an ACE Coaster Con. The three hours spent in the theatre — while it rained outside — also gave the group a much-deserved rest from the seemingly nonstop riding, eating and touring of the past few days. And in another show of going-the-extra-mile hospitality, SFNE removed the theatre's aluminum bench seating and replaced it with chairs, knowing that three hours of sitting on those benches would not be comfortable.

During the ACE presentations, the history of Six Flags New England (formerly Riverside Park) was shown in a narrated slideshow format. Most ACEers, even local members, had never seen most of the fascinating photos presented by author and historian David Cecchi.

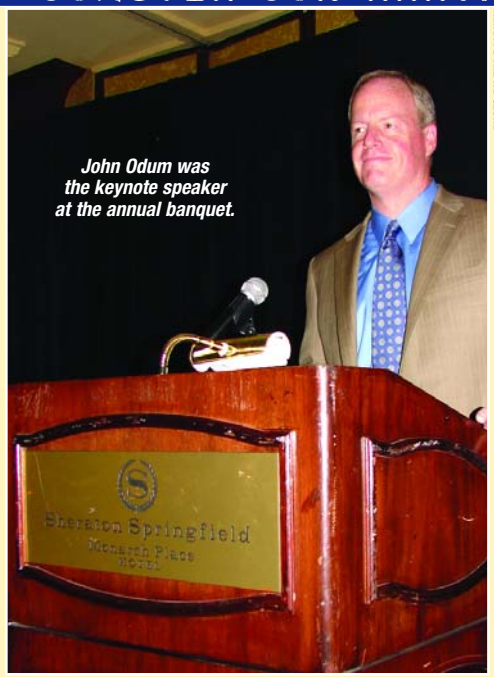
Prior to the beginning of the ACE Video Contest, video tributes to two special ACEers — Tanya Regan and Lucy White — who both passed away earlier in 2013, were shown. The videos provided an emotional roller coaster ride for the audience, from laughter to tears and back, even for those who never knew the two wonderful women whose infectiously positive personalities touched many lives.

Of the five videos submitted by ACE members for this year's ACE Video Contest, one was a clear winner before the votes were even


PHOTO BY SARAH WINDISCH

MIND ERASER


PHOTO BY ALAN SHICK



John Odum was the keynote speaker at the annual banquet.

PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN


PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN


BATMAN THE DARK KNIGHT

PHOTO BY JEFFREY SEIFERT


The Six Flags team – amazing hosts for Coaster Con XXXVI.

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER


May Coryell received the 2013 "Spirit of ACE" award from Janine Rebbie of PTCI.

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

counted. Bret Ulozas' video of the destruction of Seaside Heights, New Jersey's Casino Pier was staggering. It came as no surprise when it was announced the winner by contest director Chris Smilek during the ACE banquet later that night.

The ACE annual business meeting gave ACE's executive committee a chance to address the membership and to answer questions and discuss concerns. A couple of items of note were divulged during the meeting. *Thunderbolt* at Kennywood in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania, was voted by the executive committee to receive ACE Roller Coaster Landmark status. Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, New Jersey, and Morey's Piers in Wildwood, New Jersey, were selected as the sites for Coaster Con XXXVIII in 2015.

The night of the ACE annual banquet is always fun and full of surprises. Added to the evening's festivities were a Kids Looney Tunes party for ACEers under 12 and a Teen Tag-Up for the teens who wanted to socialize while their parents attended the banquet. Keynote speaker John Odum, Six Flags senior vice president of East Coast park operations, recounted his 40 years of experience with the company and explained the character of Six Flags. At the end of his speech, he surprised the audience by presenting a check for $5,000 from Six Flags to the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives.

Winners of the various contests of the week — Midway Olympics, Photo Contest and Video Contest — were announced by their respective contest directors, and the top three videos were shown. A moment of silence was observed during the in memoriam video, which featured photos of all of the known ACE members who passed away since the previous year's Coaster Con.

Janine Rebbie from Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters Inc. was on hand once again to present the Spirit of ACE Award, more formally known as the Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters Inc. Manufacturer's Award. The deserving recipient was a very shocked May Coryell of Connecticut. Coryell, who lost a leg in a horrifying car accident several years ago, has not let that diminish her enthusiasm for roller coasters. To this day, she continues to travel the world to visit new parks and experience their coasters and other attractions. She remains active with ACE New England's regional newsletter and volunteers at numerous coaster events every year. Coryell always has a positive attitude and a smile and is the true embodiment of the spirit of ACE.

The banquet ended with Bugs Bunny and a parade of young ACEers, who had been attending the Kids Looney Tunes party, followed by a video preview of 2014's Coaster Con at California's Great America (CGA). Park representative Edgar Vidal attended this year's Coaster Con and has vowed that next year's Con will also include numerous family- and kid-



PHOTO BY ADRIAN LLOYD


PHOTOS BY MIKE MATSCHERZ


PHOTO BY JEFFREY SEIFERT



PHOTO BY RICHARD KOPPELMAN


PHOTO BY RODNEY BOORSE

friendly events. With CGA's new *Gold Striker* wood coaster receiving rave reviews from those who have already ridden it and the fact that Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Gilroy Gardens are co-hosts for next year's Con, the event should prove to be another winner.

Those not ready to retire right away could stay up and chat with old and new friends at the social mixer at the Sheraton Springfield until nearly midnight. It's a sure bet, however, that those taking the 6:30 a.m. tour at SFNE the next morning didn't stay up that late. A unique photo op tour in the sky aboard Scream was also given to a few lucky winners. In a change from the usual Con schedule, the day after the banquet attendees could spend one more day at the primary host park, or they could choose to head directly to Canobie Lake Park, the next stop on the Con's schedule.

For the many who hadn't gotten their fill of Six Flags, breakfast was served bright and early, and SFNE fired up many of the rides that made the opening night's ERT so memorable — *Bizarro, Thunderbolt, Catwoman's Whip, Gotham City Gauntlet,* Scream and Joker's Wild Card. This morning was also the last chance that attendees had to view the items on display at the SFNE/ACE Museum. Following the Con, the timeline panels were moved to a local museum in Agawam, Massachusetts.

The final scheduled event at SFNE was a farewell celebration. A fried dough buffet, with toppings such as powdered sugar, cinnamon, chocolate and pizza sauce, was set up outside Rockville Theatre so ACEers could grab a delicious snack before entering (even more food??). Hundreds of the chairs closest to the front of the theater held a gift from Six Flags Magic Mountain — a *Full Throttle* bracelet. (*Full Throttle* had just debuted that same week at the Valencia, California, park.) When things inside got under way, ACE President Dave Altman and Events Director Paul Blick introduced a few key people from Six Flags New England, including Park President John Winkler and Melanie Smith, who had made Coaster Con such an overwhelmingly enjoyable success. There were multiple well-deserved standing ovations given by the grateful crowd. Winkler and Smith brought on stage more than a dozen SFNE employees from all divisions to receive the recognition that they deserved. It was certainly a well-coordinated team effort that made ACE's four-day visit to the park a success. Any doubt regarding what the park was capable of accomplishing during Coaster Con was easily forgotten. SFNE's resident magician, David Garrity, closed out the farewell celebration with an abbreviated version of his astounding and unexpectedly emotional magic show.

Each time ACE exited Six Flags New England after the day's scheduled events had ended,

## YANKEE CANNONBALL

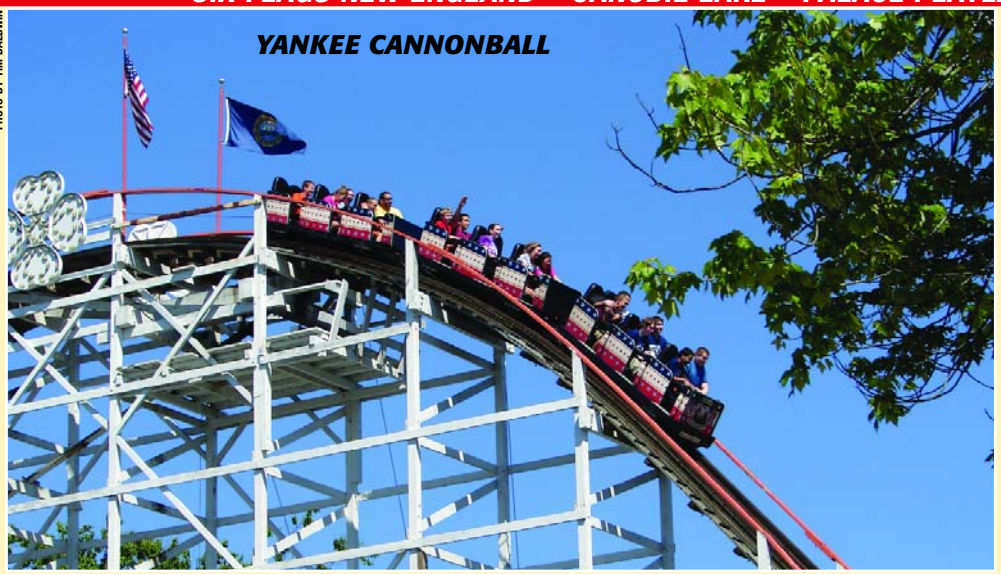


PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN



PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



PHOTO BY RODNEY BOORSE

## CANOBIE CORKSCREW

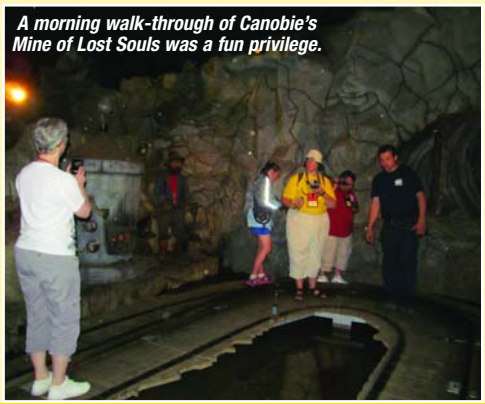


PHOTO BY RICHARD KOPPELMAN



PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

Yankee Cannonball *was given an official ACE Roller Coaster Landmark ceremony.*



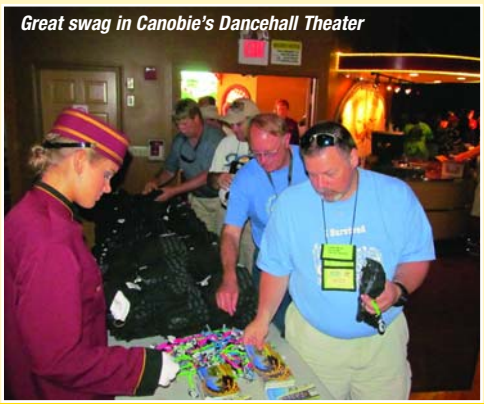
*A morning walk-through of Canobie's Mine of Lost Souls was a fun privilege.*

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



*Ryan DeMaria (left) and Chris Nicoli accept the host plaque.*

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER



*Great swag in Canobie's Dancehall Theater*

PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

attendees were given presents. From fudge to blocks of *Thunderbolt*'s wood to a custom deck of cards that final afternoon, every specialized gift was greatly appreciated. As ACE left SFNE on Wednesday, it was hard to believe that there were still three more Coaster Con co-host parks to visit. SFNE had treated ACE royally, and it was hard to say good-bye.

The first scheduled event at Canobie Lake Park in Salem, New Hampshire, was a 5:30 p.m. roast chicken dinner in the North Grove catering area, but ACEers could enter the park at any time during the day with their admission ticket. Some were heard to say that the food served at Canobie that night was just as good or better than the delicious meals at SFNE. (Pleasing ACEers with food is a sure way to start things off on the right foot.) Everyone had time for a couple of rides before the 8 p.m. private show and official welcome in Dancehall Theatre. For the past several years, Canobie has staged some amazing music shows featuring top-notch impersonators. A special best-of show was put together just for ACE. Michael Jackson, Elvis Presley and Justin Bieber showed off their moves, made hearts race and possibly broke a few in the process.

Once the park was cleared at the end of the operating day, ERT on *Yankee Cannonball* (New Hampshire's only wood coaster), *Untamed* (the only Gerstlauer Euro-Fighter coaster in the northeast), Starblaster and Psychodrome were the highlights of nighttime ERT that ran until midnight. Canobie Lake Park just glows with its beautiful neon signs and lighting at night. Many first-time visitors were stunned by the sights and rides at this gem of a park. Popcorn and soda were available for anyone who wanted a late-night snack.

The 7 a.m. ERT came quickly. The park's star coasters — *Yankee Cannonball* and *Untamed* — were on the schedule once again, as were *Canobie Corkscrew*, the powered Dragon Coaster, Frisbee and Canobie's quirky dark ride, Mine of Lost Souls. Just after ERT ended, the ACE Roller Coaster Landmark plaque for *Yankee Cannonball* was unveiled during a ceremony attended by most of the ACE members attending the Con. It was great to see such a show of support and interest as the peppy 1936 Herbert Schmeck woodie was given its due.

At the Canobie Lake farewell celebration that soon followed in Dancehall Theatre, attendees were given T-shirts, posters, key chains, postcards and more when they entered. Once everyone was seated, Ryan DeMaria, Canobie's rides and attraction manager, and Chris Nicoli, the park's marketing and entertainment manager, spoke about Canobie Lake Park and fielded questions from the audience. Their passion for the impeccable, classic park was evident. Canobie Lake Park, which dates back to 1902, contains a well-balanced mix of old and new, but



*Palace Playland at Old Orchard Beach*

PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN




PHOTO BY SARAH WINDISCH




PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER




PHOTO BY RICHARD KOPPELMAN




PHOTO BY ALAN SHICK


PHOTO BY DAVID LIPNICKY

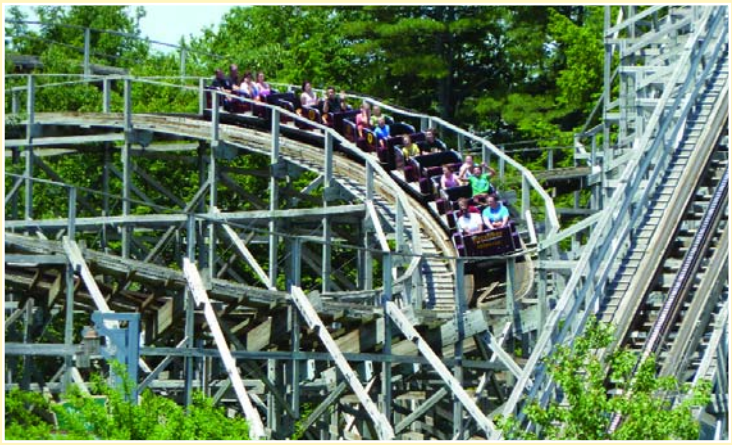

PHOTO BY RICHARD KOPPELMAN


Paul Golder (center) welcomed ACEers to Old Orchard Beach.
PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER


PHOTO BY ADRIAN LLOYD



PHOTO BY MIKE MATSCHERZ


PHOTO BY RICHARD KOPPELMAN

## EXCALIBUR


PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

A back area tour of Excalibur was a special perk for ACE.

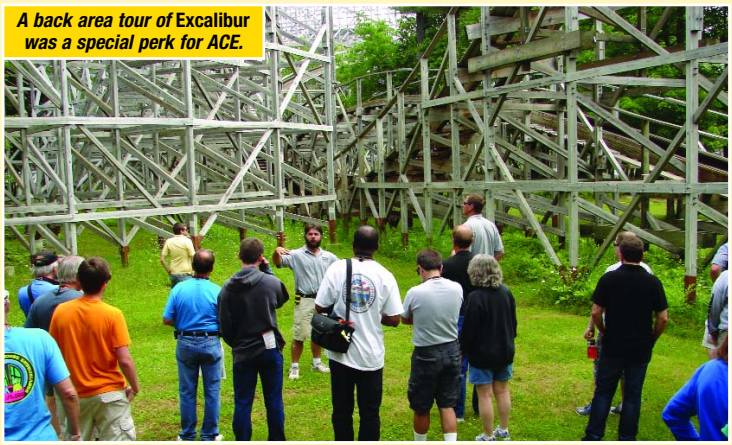

PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN


PHOTO BY MIKE MATSCHERZ

Lunch entertainment was provided by Funtown Splashtown U.S.A.


PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

## WILD MOUSE


PHOTO BY RICHARD KOPPELMAN


PHOTO BY TIM BALDWIN

Funtown's Ed Hodgdon received a plaque of appreciation from Blick and Altman.


PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

always looks fresh. It is a favorite of families in northern New England and ACE as well.

Coaster Con attendees could stay as long as they wanted at Canobie on Thursday before making the 90-minute trip to Old Orchard Beach, Maine, and Palace Playland, the only amusement park on the Atlantic shore in New England. Rides opened that evening at Palace Playland at 5 p.m., which allowed everyone to take their time traveling from Salem, New Hampshire, to southern Maine. Some stopped at York's Wild Kingdom to check out the selection of rides and animal attractions as well as ride 2010's *Wacky Mouse*, while others dined at seafood restaurants in southern Maine.

Since many area schools had just let out for the summer, Palace Playland was filled with teenagers who call the no-admission amusement park a favorite hangout. Fortunately for ACE, very few were actually riding any of the rides, so lines were nonexistent. It was not a challenge to ride everything at Palace Playland before the 11 p.m. ERT even started. Let this serve as proof that loitering teenagers aren't so bad after all. *Galaxi, Orient Express* and a host of flat rides gave the Coaster Con attendees, quite a few of whom had never been to Maine before, plenty to ride that night. Food vouchers that gave ACE a discount at various food outlets made sure that no one went hungry.

That evening's fireworks show on the beach was a spectacular sight. With booming, colorful bursts of light in the sky above Palace Playland and flashing lights on the rides at boardwalk level, it was a magical night, although considerably cooler than previous nights owing to the oceanside location. Paul Golder of the Golder family, which owns, operates and manages Palace Playland, handed out keychains and welcomed the group. Although many Con attendees were too exhausted to stay until the end of ERT, quite a few hardy ACE members marathoned on the bumper cars until 1 a.m.

Funtown Splashtown USA in Saco, less than four miles inland from Old Orchard Beach, welcomed ACE with Friday morning ERT on all of the park's major Funtown attractions. Included were *Excalibur* (Maine's only wood coaster), *Wild Mouse*, Dragon's Descent, Thunder Falls Log Flume, Astrosphere (and its infamous bunny) and more. Only those who wanted to ride in the front row on *Excalibur* had much of a wait on anything that morning.

Once Funtown and its waterpark, Splashtown, opened to the public, ACE members had an hour to explore the family-owned-and-operated parks before lunch in the picnic area. Funtown Splashtown USA Vice President and General Manager Cory Hutchinson and Marketing Manager Ed Hodgdon welcomed ACE and received a plaque of appreciation from Altman and Blick, who had presented similar plaques to the other host parks as a way of expressing our thanks. ACE New England regional rep Rus Ozana took a moment at the microphone and informed the crowd how much the founder of Funtown, Kenneth Cormier, who had died in January at the of 80, would have enjoyed seeing nearly 400 coaster enthusiasts gathering at his park for an ACE Coaster Con. When *Excalibur* was built in 1998, the park suddenly appeared on ACE's radar, and Cormier and his wonderful family soon became good friends of ACE.

Once the scheduled lunchtime ended, Coaster Con XXXVI was officially over. Attendees were free to stay all day at Funtown Splashtown USA if they wanted. No doubt many checked out the always expanding Splashtown, which features an impressive selection of water slides for a relatively small park. Many headed off to Story Land in Glen, New Hampshire, and Santa's Village in Jefferson, New Hampshire, to take advantage of the free admission offer that Ozana had arranged with the family parks for ACE. Others headed home or to a post-Con event at New York's The Great Escape or even further north to Canada — no doubt exhausted but having experienced one of the best and most well-planned Coaster Cons in ACE history. The hospitality extended to ACE was second to none. With pleasant surprises (and perfect weather) at every turn and a wide variety of parks and coasters along the way, ACE's 36th Coaster Con exceeded all expectations.

**Mike Thompson joined ACE in 1996 and has attended 14 Coaster Cons. In addition to being editor of *ACE News* since 2009, Mike is an assistant regional rep for ACE New England.**

## 2013 COASTER CON XXXVI GROUP PHOTO BY S. MADONNA HORCHER

