

Metroline

ACE Regional Newsletter
Regional Representative: Colleen Whyte

Winter/Spring 2002

Vol. 1, Issue 1

Hello! My name is Colleen. Welcome to Issue #1 of **Metroline**, the official Newsletter of the ACE MetroNY region.

ACE (American Coaster Enthusiasts) is the world's largest organization of its kind. Founded in 1978 as a not-for profit, all-volunteer club, it promotes the conservation, appreciation, knowledge and enjoyment of both classic wooden roller coasters and contemporary steel coasters.

In this issue, we list the opening dates and schedules of amusement parks in our area (New York City, Westchester and Long Island), new rides (where info is available), upcoming events, etc., and air a few observations and opinions about recent events.

Besides **Metroline**, we at MetroNY have also set up a website at www.aceonlineny.org. Thanks to the generous tech help of David Feuer and the creativity of Terry Lind, you can now check our website for any time sensitive announcements. If you would like your email address added to our MetroNY database (or if you changed your email address and want it updated), please send it to dave@mrdave.com. For those of you without a personal computer you can access our website at most Public Libraries.

One of the aspects of ACE dear to my heart is preservation. Although we were too late to save the *Coney Island Thunderbolt*, we must now pool all our resources to save Whalom Park, home of the *Flyer Comet* in neighboring Massachusetts. I urge you to contact Allyson Bowen at http://www.savewhalompark.com for more information on this vital matter.

Our region can be as active as you would like, so please tell us your fancy: what would you like to see in *Metroline* and on our website? Ideas and submissions are always welcomed so don't be shy! You will find a short questionnaire in this mailing. Kindly fill it out and mail it to:

Metroline Editorial Staff

c/o Colleen Whyte, ACE MetroNY Regional Rep 2600 Henry Hudson Parkway 3A Bronx, NY 10463
Work - 212-846-3920 between 10 AM-5 PM Home - 718-884-6696 after 7 PM-10PM email - cwhyte@aceonline.org

If you have any concerns/questions about ACE and the MetroNY region, please let me hear from you. Happy coastering!

VIEW FROM THE LAST SEAT

~ Thoughts on the 2001 Preservation Conference ~
by Libby and Charlie Deierlein
Friday, August 4, 2001 - Playland Park, Rye, NY (by Charlie)

As resident of lifelong Westchester County, NY, a suburb of New York City, I have been to Rye Playland many, many times. While in high school, my father had a summer job here. Later as a father of six children, he took us here every summer. My mother was a frequent flyer (before there was such a term) on the Aeroplane Coaster, before its demise in 1957. And my daughter, Libby, insists on having her birthday party (July 21) here every year, even though she's now 19! So it was a sense of loyalty to MY park that drove me to register for the Preservation Conference, which started at Adventureland in Farmingdale, Long Island, NY followed by Playland Friday and Saturday and on to Lake Compounce in Bristol CT on Sunday.

I drove up to the entrance a little before 3pm on Friday not knowing what to expect, as this was my first ACE meet. As soon as a table was brought out, the registration committee flew into action. There was Mark Cole with all the registration envelopes ready to go. And fellow ACErs

mobbing the table to 'get their stuff and get goin.' And then I met Colleen Whyte! After a short chat with her, it was like I was an old hand at this. Before you knew it, we were in the office meeting and talking with the park operations management (Playland is the only amusement park in the US owned and operated by a governmental entity). Joe Montalto, Director for Playland, and Colleen renewed acquaintances, talked about what it would take to make the Dragon Coaster a classic again (the train cars are non-conforming), about the events for the weekend and other park 'business.' Back outside, I saw that our County Executive, Andy Spano, had stopped at the registration table. I thanked him on our behalf for the county's support of Playland and described for him what ACE and our conference were all about

Registration was over as quickly as it began (I tried to help with map/brochures of the park and where to go for dinner, etc) and we were ready to hit the park. Just then a crew from Discover Channel stopped to talk with us. They were in the park filming the

action on Friday evening. I gave Colleen a personal tour of MY park, stopping to see the just-installed family coaster (intermediate between the Kiddie and the Dragon Coaster) but it wasn't running yet. (I later heard from Colleen that the ride was opened on Saturday morning and ACE was one of the first riders). We made for the Dragon, manipulating our place in line to get the last seat. I found out that Colleen and I both prefer wooden coasters and the last seat in the train.

After our ride, we stroll the park seeing other ACErs, smiling and waving, stopping to ask how they like the park, grabbing a soda, and asking others what their dinner plans are (I promised my wife I'd be home for dinner) and checking out things like the Derby Racer, Hurricane, the Big Band that's playing tonight and the fireworks at 9:00pm. I had to leave but promised to see them in Lake Compounce (I have things to do which override my greater desire to return to Playland tomorrow).

Sunday, August 6, 2001 - Lake Compounce (by Libby)

It's early, hot and humid. But I don't care. I'm going to ride the roller coasters with my dad. He told me that this group we watch on Discover and Learning Channels (Ten Best...., Guinness Book of Records, etc) is hosting a meeting here on the East Coast:

of all places, Playland and here at the Lake. And that he would take me to Compounce on Sunday if my chores were done and Mom says OK. Mom prefers to stay home and "have the house to myself." We plan to open the park (11:00am) and close it (9:00pm). We could stay for something called ERT after the park closes, but we would get home really late and Dad has to be up at 5:00am for work, so maybe we'll get to do that next time. Hey, next time! All right, Dad!

How ironic that my grand-

VIEW FROM THE LAST SEAT (Cont'd)

father lives so close (1/2 hour away in Southbury) and we've never visited Lake Compounce. But we arrive on time and there they are - those crazy people I've seen on TV that are here for only one thing - the coasters. Well, we get our wristbands and head for the Boulder Dash. On a bench outside the station I meet Colleen Whyte, who gave me some of the best advice on coasters yet: "Be sure to ride it when it's dark." I'm ready for my first ride on BD, sitting in the back. The station loads in halfs, so you can choose front or back of the train, and then wait for your favorite seat. Dad says to ride the last seat first. Up the side of the mountain, the lift hill takes us to the top, a short turn and little hill and then, WHAM, all of sudden it happens: before we know it we are rolling down and past the station house at 60mph and flying through the trees. It's one hop hill after another and you can't see them coming. We bank left, then right, up off the seat (Dad says it's 'air time'), then down again, more banks and hops and before you can stop yelling "MORE," it's over with a jerk of the air brakes. It is then that I decide that this is MY coaster.

A short walk down the exit way, out to the entrance and back on again. This time we're doing the front seat. Dad looks stupid! He holds his hands out straight like he's flying Supermanstyle. He says something about the 'hands to the sky' method reduces

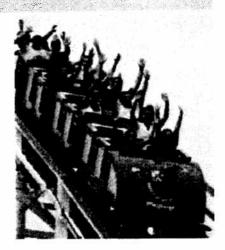
some of the anatomical impact of the ride. I don't know, he's an engineer; go figure. Back at the station I say "one more." That's when one of the girls working here said to just stay on, there was nobody waiting - so we did. After that ride, for a change of pace, we go over to the Wildcat a couple of turns. It's early afternoon and everybody must be eating because there's no lines anywhere. As we walk back to get on again Dad launches into a comparison of the Dragon and Wildcat. Give it up, Dad, and just en-10y the ride!

It's really hot now, and the lakefront beach and waterpark looks really cool but we opt for Log Flume where we can ride and get wet at the same time. I don't know when I decided to forget fear and go upside down, but I did, and proudly announce that I was ready for to ride Zoomerang. I don't know which is scarier, going backwards or going over. Dad says to look sideways and watch the world spinning around. The first time I closed my eyes, the second time I just opened them and screamed alot. We tour the rest of the park by miniature train, take the chairlift ride for some breezes, check out Monmouth Falls, take a trolley ride back to the rides, and on to Boulder Dash again. We stop for something to eat, and by now it's getting late. We stop at the gift shop for two BD t-shirts. After some ice cream, it's now dark enough to ride BD.

What a completely different ride! The line is too long to wait for the front seat so we take the second. While waiting in line, we talk to other coaster people who are asking our favorite rides and telling us of theirs (Shivering Timbers, Millennium Force, Boulder Dash and others) and then we're ready for the last ride, of course, in the last seat.

As the ACE people gather at the entrance circle, a beautiful round garden with a carousel horse in the middle, waiting to reenter for their ERT, we make our way to the parking lot, sharing our ideas about today. On the way home, Dad promises that he will register both of us with ACE the next time he re-registers. All right, Dad. And thanks for a great day.

Libby and Charlie are brand new members of ACE, and we'd like to give them a hearty welcome into our club. The Metroline staff thanks you both for your submissions to the newsletter. We look forward to hearing more about your experiences at ACE events and visits to parks in general.



JACK'S CORNER

DENO'S SEA SERPENT AND THE SPY by Jack Holmes

"Life is too short for kiddle coaster," an ACE friend of mine once said.

Excuuse me? I couldn't agree less.

King's Island, King's Dominion and Canada's Wonderland are all blessed with Scooby Doo 'kiddie' woodies: each, slightly varied in design, is a paragon of the perfect roller coaster. Nice drops, fast curves, laterals, double-ups and double-downs, speed bumps, even a tunnel on one of them – it's all there, junior size. And air time? Hey, I lost a very expensive cap riding the backseat of Beastie (formerly Scooby Doo) flying over it's 38' high first drop at King's Island.

And what of Knoebel's 'kiddie' High Speed Thrill Coaster? If ever there was a bucking-bronco, off-your-bum, slam-dunk of a ride, this is it. "Kiddies scream to get off of it." Dick Knoebel once told me. Not so, we ACEers. We like trying to ride dolphins."

So it was with real context of 1998 that I so read the signat Deno's Wonder Wheel park in Coney: "Coming Soon—THE the SEA SERPENT—a custom-built family coaster for this space. The in ride your child has been dreaming about!" What child? ME.

Coney Island hadn't had a new coaster in years. Custom-built, eh? Where? By whom? When? For weeks I was like an ol' blood-hound sniffin' around Deno's small park for a scent, a bone... anything.

After a month went by, I noticed the Spin The Apple ride next to The Whip had been moved and a fence put up. By standing tiptoe on a bench, I could see a large area of concrete being cleared. (Deno's Boardwalk entrance level is built on raised concrete, like a garage, with storage and work areas beneath.) But

what would be built there? A steel coaster? A small woodie? My imagination raced.

It must have looked weird, this elderly, balding man peering over that fence weekend after weekend. One day in June, when I noticed the park's mechanic hammering fresh pine boards together, I could stand it no longer. "Excuse me," I yelled, "is it going to be a woodie?" The man looked at me warily, then went on hammering. When I yelled again, he stared back, then abruptly left the platform.

Week after week, there was hardly a day I wasn't there peeking over that darn fence or peering into the storage area. On July 4th, I bumped headlong into the mechanic and said "Hi. I'm an ACEer - a roller coaster nut, y'know?" (He didn't.) "When will it be ready?" "It - it's been delayed. I hear," he stammered "Not sure." Upon further questioning, he said the wood was for the loading platform and that a steel coaster was coming from out West somewhere - maybe this week or the next? Wasn't sure. He just worked there.

Soon I was leaving my job in Jackson Heights early every day and taking two long subway rides to peer over that fence. I was positively obsessed. But what I didn't know was, so was the mechanic, Al. He was sure I was a spy or an insurance inspector or – who knows what? But he thought I was up to no good and had told his boss so.

One rainy, humid day in late July, the fence was gone and lo and behold! Sea Serpent had finally arrived: piles of tubular track numbered in chalk, a motor sitting under a plastic tarp, links of chain curled near a Whip, a train in the alley, metal pieces to be welded into bents, plastic buckets with screws, bolts,

electrical wiring – you name it – she was strewn all over the place like a Toys "R Us had exploded. I stayed extra late that night as a feverishly sweating crew (looking at me furtively, I noticed) put together the first few feet of what was to become the lift hill.

The next day I watched it take shape. And the next....

Finally, a pleasant-looking man in his mid-30's came up to me and said, "Excuse me, sir, but who the Hell are you? You've been making my mechanic, Al, and his crew jittery for months now."

It didn't take long for me to clear the air. Dennis Vourderis, co-owner of the park with his brother Steve, <u>had</u> heard of ACE. He empathized with my passion for coasters, told me how their Greek father had built the Wonder Wheel, introduced me to the Sea Serpent's designer/builder, John Miler. and so on Once Dennis realized my passion, he was eager to pass along <u>his</u>: he loved Coney Island!

The Gala Opening on Aug.

7º had a TV crew from NY1 there, lots of kiddies; kith and kin of the Vourderis clan—and me gazing on in the back row. So it was a real surprise when Dennis waved said, "C'mon, Jack! You've been a part of this as much as anyone." And that's how I got to ride the four hill, double-helix Sea Serpent in the next to the last seat—arms up in the air—on its premiere run!

When the TV lady asked me on camera how the ride was, I said, "Terrific! It has airtime, nice laterals, good negative G's... yada, yada, yada." But a 7-yr old toddler behind me said it best.

"Wow!" she beamed. "The Sea Serpent rocks1"

104 BRITS WIPED OUT BY A HURRICANE AND A CYCLONE!

by Jack Holmes

Somehow the headline above never made it into The Times or even the <u>National Enquirer</u>, but it happened. I was there,

For reasons unknown, the Roller Coaster Club of Great Britain's semi-annual tours of American amusement parks skipped Coney Island, Rye Playland and parks north in their four previous trips in '93, '95', '97 and '99. But when Andy Hine, RCCGB's intrepid founder, asked his club members in a survey which USA coaster they most wanted to ride, the answer came thundering back: the Coney Island Cyclone. The 1927 legend we New York ACers know so well (and take for granted) is a mythic to Brits as Stonehenge is to us.

This year's tour, called 2001: A Coaster Odyssey, kicked off in Toronto with Canada's Wonderland, followed by SF Darien Lake, Seabreeze, SF Great Escape, SF New England, Lake Compounce, Rye Playland, Coney Island, Domey Park, Hersheypark, Knoebels, Lakemont, Idlewild, Kennywood, SF Worlds of Adventure (Geanga Lake) and to top it off, Cedar Point. 16 parks in 14 days with nearly 100 coasters! I had never ridden half of them and eagerly signed on.

By the time my Brit chums and I sped toward Rye Playland on our two huge buses (named "Megafobia" and "Pheonic"), we had already been travelling for one week on a Marine bootcamp schedule. On that Sunday, June 10th, we had risen at dawn, packed, grabbed a Holiday Inn bun on the fly, jumped on the bus by 6:30, entered Lake Compounce at 8:30 and had an hour's ERS ("S" stands for session in Britspeak) on the unique Boulder Dash by 10 a.m., followed by six

more hours on the venerable Wild-cat, Zoomerang, wet rides, top spin and (to me) the longest most terrifying ride in any USA park, the Ski Lift. Sunburned and half-zonked, we boarded our buses late in the afternoon for the 75 mile drive to the second park of the day, Rye Playland. As we approached it, I wondered what my European pals would think of it.

Leave it to foreigners to see things you and I probably overlook. Rye's Drugon Coaster was enjoyed for what we forget it is: it's really a Scenic Coaster (or was, before the park's insurance insisted they change to Morgan trains with under wheels) that rides similarly to the Scenic in Margate's Dreamland. No surprises here for the Brits. Nor was Rye's art deco design a novelty: England's parks are all like that.

No, what blew them away was the Hurricane. "Is this really in America?" they asked. "It's bloody murder!" said another. "That neck breaker there," said a third," said a third, pointing to its mid-ride twisting 90 degree dive, "I cahn't believe it!!! I've got to ride it again." It became a kind of litmus test: how many times did you endure the Hurricane? My Brit friends also swore that Rye's Derby Racer was much faster that Blackpool's. But it was the total insanity of Hurricane that caught the group's imagination. (A week later, while riding Millenium Force, a Brit in the seat in front of me yelled back, "It's first class, right, Jack? Almost as good as the Hurricane."

The next morning, at least on our Megafobia coach, the stereo system blared Sinatra's classic "New York, New York" as 52 voices lustily sang along: "If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere!" The whole bus was rocking and the excitement was electric as we pulled in next to the Cyclone. Again, I was nervous. How would it stand up to its mythical reputation? More to the point how would the Cyclone crew take 104 'coaster crizy' Brits going up their lifthill chanting...

Oggy Oggy...Oy Oy Oy!
Oggy Oggy...Oy Oy Oy!
Oggy—Oy! Oggy—Oy!
Oggy Oggy Oggy...Oy Oy Oy,
Oof!

In short, Cyclone delivered beautifully. Was it 'a bit rough'? You bet. But Brit after Brit came up to tell me how much smoother it was than they had heard, how intense its first drop was! Amizing! Hadn't they been on steeper and faster new woodies? Yes, technically, but this felt like them. And therein lies Cyclone's secrets: in its trompe l'oiel (trick the eye) drop into its banked final turnaround, its ultra tight layout and its ziggyzag mad dash finale, it truly is a timeless classic, a perfectly designed roller coaster. I'd always thought so, but then it's my hometown coaster. It was great to hear it from others.

But the real surprise at Coney Island for the Brits (and Dennis Vourderis will love this!) was Deno's Wonder Wheel. When was the last time you heard screams on that? It was a totally unique experience for them! The very idea of a ferris wheel cage suddenly rolling forward and back was thrilling and scary and odd and unforgettable.

"Ooh, that Wonder Wheel was brilliant, Jack," said more than one Brit. "It gave me the creepies."

Right. Just how I felt when I saw Stonehenge.

RYE PLAYLAND MANAGEMENT CITED IN NATIONAL PUBLICATION

The September 2001 issue of Family Circle magazine features an article highly critical of amusement park safety. Fatal Attractions: How safe Are America's Amusement Parks, describes several fatal and near-fatal accidents involving coasters and other rides at some famous and not-so-famous parks. After a discussion of G-forces and its effects on the body, the article calls for federal action to regulate amusement park safety.

The lone positive highlight lauds Playland Park, in Rye, NY:

"One amusement park, Playland, in Rye, New York did put safety before profits two years ago when the owner, Joe Montalto, refused to open a new roller coaster after discovering that it generated lateral G-forces of twice the recommended German limit. Montalto was concerned about the snap of the neck. 'What Playland did voluntarily is extremely unusual,' says Montalto."

Actually, as many of you know, Joe Montalto is Director of Operations for Playland Park, which is owned and operated by the Parks and Recreation Department of Westchester County. Mr. Montalto and the staff of Playland Park are to be congratulated for their courageous stance of 'safety first.'

submitted by: Charlie Deierlein Cortlandt Manor, NY

Legislators to consider Playland projects
By Keith Eddings
The Journal News
(Original publication: June 25, 2001)

WHITE PLAINS - Westchester legislators today will consider several multimillion-dollar renovation projects at Playland Amusement Park in Rye, including a controversial proposal to rebuild the colonnades and towers at the historic park that could cost as much as \$10 million.

The Board of Legislators had been scheduled to act two weeks ago on a request from parks officials to add \$3.8 million to the \$6.2 million that already has been approved to rebuild the colonnades and towers. Parks officials said the additional money was needed to rebuild the colonnades in "a manner sympathetic to the original art-deco treatment," but the legislators balked at the cost. Instead, they asked Joseph Montalto, the deputy parks commissioner who oversees Playland, to consider simply replacing the colonnades and towers with rows of fountains or flagpoles or other structures.

The colonnades and towers frame the center mall and mark the entrances to the park, which opened in 1928.

They are cracked and crumbling after more than seven decades of use and neglect. Preservationists and parks officials have warned that tearing them down without replacing them could jeopardize the park's designation as a national historic landmark.

Montalto also is seeking to add nearly \$1.9 million to the \$2 million that already has been approved to replace a stage at the foot of the mall and a maintenance garage under the Dragon Coaster.

The legislators also are scheduled today to consider another request to borrow \$3 million to update infrastructure at Playland, a proposal that has been less controversial.

Metroline Questionnaire

(Kindly fill out and return)

1.	What are your primary interests in ACE		
	 a. Preservation of rides, parks, archives, etc. b. Riding the rides with others (ERT) c. Club events, Coaster Cons, tours, etc. d. Collecting memorabilia, T-shirts, etc. e. Other? (use other side to explain) 		
2.	Would you be interested in regional events such as -		
	a. Attending the annual "Cyclone Day" at Coney?b. Attending an off-season (Winter) get-together?c. Receiving an off-season issue of <i>Metroline</i>?		
3.	Would you like to be notified about formal or informal PA, MA, NY) our region?	l events in o	
4.	Would you attend more Club events if you had		
	a. Transportation? (typical NYer with no car)b. Special help? (Elderly, wheelchair, etc.)	Yes Yes	No
5.	Are you available to help the MetroNY region or ACE? In what capacity?		
	a. Writing for or editing the Newsletterb. Photography / recording of eventsc. Registration & co-ordination at club eventsd. Other? (use other side to explain)		
6.	What did you think of Issue #1 of <i>Metroline</i> ? (use	other side t	o elaborate)
7	a. Do you have a PC?b. Can you send and receive emails?c. Can you access our Website on your computer?	Yes	No No No
Your name and address here. Thank you for your feedback.			
		_	
		-	

PARK INFORMATION



2245 Route 110, Farmingdale, NY 11735 - Phone:631-694-6868 Currently all indoor kiddle rides are open year round Adventureland opens March 23&24, then open for Spring break March 28-April 7, weekends/holidays after till mid June, then open everyday. till Labor Day, weekends and holidays till Halloween New for 2002 - Top Scan, Music Express, Zamperla Ballon Tower

1000 Surf Avenue (at West 10th Street), Coney Island, Brooklyn, NY

718-265-2100

Admission to the Boardwalk, Beach and Park is free

Rides can be purchased individually from \$2.00-\$5.00 or a Pay-One-Price Ticket for major rides can be bought for \$14.99: Session I and Session II (Mon-Thur 12-6PM, 4-10PM and Fri 12-6PM only) Tickets sold up to 1 hour before session ends. Discount tickets are available for \$2 per ticket (contact Colleen Whyte for further details) * Kiddle Rides can be purchased in blocks at 10 rides for \$15 * The

75th Anniversary

Cyclone Roller Coaster is \$5 with a re-ride at \$4

Opening Day March 24, 2002 June 22, 2002 Mermaid Parade

Cyclone ACE Day June 29, 2002

655 Long Island Avenue

Medford, NY 11763-2517; 631-475-1771

Through Labor Day: Sun - Thu 10am to 9pm; Fri - Sat 10am to 10pm; after Labor Day: Sun - Thu 11am to 8pm; Dec - March closed on Mondays

Deno's Wonder Wheel Park, 3059 West 12th St., Brooklyn, NY,

Phone: 718-372-2592

FREE Admission. Hours: 11am-midnight. Open Weekends: April, May, Sept, &

October. Open 7 Days: May, June, July, & August

New for 2002: Game Arcade

FAIRYLAND KIDDIE PARK & ARCADE

2361 Utica Avenue, Brooklyn, NY

(718) 253-3391 Small kiddie coaster Open year round

JUMBO JET **GO KART CITY** 718-372-7099

New for 2002: 30ft tall rock climbing wall, water boat ride

1824 Shore Pky., Brooklyn, NY, Phone:(718) 996-4002

NELLIE BLY WOSENENT PARM

New and improved amusement area.

Open weekends in March

Open daily in April

Various theme nights throughout the season Pay One Price Admission: One Person - \$9.50 Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00AM to 2:00PM Wednesday Evenings from 7:30PM to 10:30PM

PALISADES CENTER MALL

West Nyack, NY Open year round Small kiddie coaster



Playland Parkway, Rye, NY; 914-813-7010 Playland's major rides are 2 to 4 tickets each

Kiddyland rides are 2 tickets each.

24-ticket book 16-ticket book

\$20 \$16

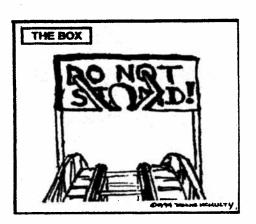
8-ticket book Single Ticket \$8.50 \$1.25

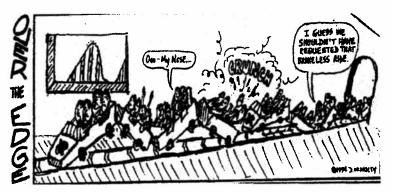
New: Playland Plunge and Power Surge



1514 Broadway (between 44th and 45th Streets)
New York, New York 10036, 1-800-TOYSRUS
Monday thru Friday 10am-9pm
Saturday and Sunday 11am-8pm
60 ft. tall ferris wheel, entire Kinetic amusement park model, gigantic walkthrough Barbie's dollhouse

COMIC STATION





Special Thanks to the following people:
Keith B. Johnson
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