



# ACE *New York* MetroLINE

Serving the ACE New York City Region

Spring 2009





# Opening Day at Coney Island

**April 5, 2009**

For most people, Sunday, April 5th was Palm Sunday, but for us ACE members it meant Cyclone Sunday! The Cyclone has a long history of opening for the season on Palm Sunday. This year we lucked out with great weather. It was warm and sunny and over 100 people turned out for the event. The festivities started around 11:30 AM with the band playing in the street beside the Cyclone. "Ms. Cyclone", Angie Pontani, was there to help celebrate all decked out in her "Ms Cyclone" sash. Then about noon after the ceremonial egg cream christening by Marty Markowitz, the Cyclone took it's first run of it's 82nd season. The first 100 people were lucky enough to get a free ride.



We walked passed Astroland to see what it looked like. It was very weird for it not to be open. Where some of our favorite rides once stood was now piles of rubble. Dante's Inferno for instance, was an empty shell of a building. It was hard for some

of us to see the park like this especially after having so many summers of happy memories there.

After a few rides on the Cyclone, Nathan's was calling. It was time for the traditional lunch. You can't go to Coney Island and not go to Nathan's. The beautiful day seemed to bring everyone out and it was most noticeable at Nathan's where the lines went out to the curb.

Once we were all stuffed, off to Deno's Wonder Wheel Park we went. The Vourderis family treated us very well, offering us discounted wristbands. It was great to see so many people at the park. Between the crowds and the weather, Deno's stayed open till about 8 PM allowing families plenty of time to enjoy the park. We took a ride on the Wonder Wheel, in a swinging car of course. We also got to enjoy the bumper cars, the kiddie coaster and Spook-a-rama a few times. The employees were





very welcoming and made for an enjoyable afternoon.

Our day ended with a sunset stroll on the boardwalk, which wrapped up a great day at Coney Island. By the look of things, Coney Island is gearing up for a great summer of fun.

**Noreen O'Connor-Ubinas**

**Photos: Bill Galvin,  
Luko Simlesa &  
Marilyn Tirado**







*The former site of Astroland Park*



# COASTER ODDITIES

## Coasters you won't find anywhere else

You know how it is! For vacation, the family wants to go somewhere THEY want to go to and you don't care where it is as long as there is a coaster, amusement park or something of interest to you.

When my wife said she wanted to visit Prince Edward Island, Canada, I didn't hesitate. New territory, new experiences and maybe, just maybe, a coaster park somewhere. After some investigation (that you, ACE Online, for the website link) I found *The Sandspit* near Cavendish, the cultural center of all things *Anne of Green Gables*. For those of you who are into literary things such as the *Green Gables* stories, the island is definitely a 'must see'.

PEI is reachable by plane (couple of hours from LaGuardia) if you want to rent a car, or 2 day drive with ferry or bridge toll. It's not big; doable in a week with lots of places to see and things to do for kids of all ages. We noticed many grandparents/grand children groups wherever we went.

When it came 'my turn' we found our way to the Sandspit, looking for the only coaster on Prince Edward Island. It's called The Cyclone (don't jump to conclusions yet). The park is an all-day-bracelet or pay-as you-ride ticket operation with no charge for parking or admission. We looked over the hillside on which the park is located, and, there it was, at the far end: THE CYCLONE. I rushed over to the ticket booth and for \$4.00 (Canadian) I scored one round on this 'thrill ride': a steel super wild-mouse ride. Imagine my surprise when the only operating car arrived at the platform:



Wow, a covered roller coaster – now that's unique. The ride attendant, looking every bit of 18 years old, explained that the cover was required to keep debris from flying in our face, to keep us from falling out, etcetera, and etcetera. Ah, but there is a lap bar, so fear not, safety was adhered to.

A young fellow in the front seat with me said this was his favorite ride in the whole park and this was his fifteenth ride today. If you've been to a local county fair or the like, you'll know what Sandspit is all about. On the Thrill-o-meter, I'd give The Sandspit Cyclone a 2. (If they would lose the cover, I'd give it a 3. The cover seriously detracts from the experience). But the park and the Cyclone are worth the stop, and since you'll be here anyway, seek it out even it's just to add it to your "Most Difficult To Get" coaster count.

Happy coastering!

**Charlie Deierlein**  
**Cortlandt Manor, NY**

For further interest, check out The Sandspit via the web at

<http://www.sandspit.com> and [http://www.sandspit.com/Attractions/attractions\\_thrill.html](http://www.sandspit.com/Attractions/attractions_thrill.html)

Here is another first-person account of their experience with PEI amusement parks:

[http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/384341/sandspit\\_cavendish\\_beach\\_amusement.html?cat=16](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/384341/sandspit_cavendish_beach_amusement.html?cat=16)

For travel information on Prince Edward Island, see: <http://www.tourismpei.com>

Prince Edward Island - definitely worth the visit, and affordable.

## Member profile: Dainan Rafferty

### “Thank You, ACE”

Some kids are born with a silver spoon in their mouth. My son Dainan was born with his finger on an E-Stop button. From the moment he could talk, everything was about rollercoasters, and everything became a roller coaster. I can vividly remember him using his Fisher Price cars as coaster cars and having them roll across the washing machine hoses. Every little toy man had it's hands in the air, as Dainan would make coaster sounds. He couldn't have even been two years old yet. Every video he watched was about or had some coasters in it. It was inborn.

My family is from Coney Island. We'd often go down to Astroland, and hang out there. Gerry at the Cyclone, an old family friend, would let the boys (Dainan is a twin) sit in the seats. They loved it, and we went almost every weekend. Gerry told me about a roller coaster group that he thought Dainan might be interested in. I looked into American Coaster Enthusiasts and knew it was where Dainan needed to be. Using his own money, Dainan joined when he was eight years old. At the time, he was the youngest individual member in ACE's history.

We started going to ACE events, just me and Dainan. It was our thing. No matter what craziness was going on in our lives, we always had an ACE event to look forward to. His passion for the rides and



*Eastcoaster 2000*

the amusement park industry in general brought him so much joy. Eastcoaster was our yearly retreat, and something we both looked forward to. Even though I am not a coaster enthusiast, through Dainan I have picked up the lingo and could keep up with what was going on. I even found myself getting excited about ERT and buffets!

Most of the ACE members we have met along the way have been amazing people. Even though Dainan was so young they never treated him like a kid, but had conversations with him as if he were an equal.



*Eastcoaster 2008*

The love and knowledge of coasters they shared leveled the playing field. He was truly accepted by ACE members as one of their own.

As he got older, we knew that he would want to make this his career somehow. So it was no surprise when he started college this year, and majored in Mechanical Engineering with the hopes of someday creating the rollercoasters he loves so much. Through ACE he has, from a very young age, been networking with people from the parks, people who design the rides and others in the industry. Because of this, he has worked in Astroland, and is currently working at Six Flags Great Adventure. In August, Dainan will be leaving for Orlando, Fla. to be a part of the Disney College Program where he was recently accepted into the Attractions department. I really believe the guidance and encouragement he recieved growing up as an ACE member has brought him to where he is now.

Dainan is now an adult and has his own car. He takes frequent coaster road trips with friends. In fact, he just came back from a European trip filled with trips to amusement parks. It's hard as a parent to let go, but I know he is with good people. These days there is no reason for him to bring his mom along to coast-erthons and conventions, but those memories of our mother/son coaster trips will always be very close to my heart.

They say it takes a villiage to raise a child, and I have found that to be true. I will be forever grateful that ACE was a part of ours.

**Sam Rafferty**



## Arts & Crafts

# Making ride models

My name is John Hunt. I am a huge fan of roller coasters and amusement parks. I always had a strong passion for Coney Island. Born and raised in Boston Massachusetts, I was lucky to visit Coney island when I was very young back in the early 1970's. I did not get to ride the Cyclone until 1978. I am now a local to Coney Island.

Living on Long Island. I have been constructing models of rides since the age of 12. Back then they were made of cardboard and tooth picks. Today, I use more architectural materials and now model building today is not only a hobby but business as well. I could not even tell you of how many models that I have built but I would say it is in the hundreds I am sure. Here are photos of my recent models. I have built Coney Island parachutes as how the ride looked in black and the cranberry color. The black one is for a client and the other belongs to me. I am building the landmarks of Coney island that will be displayed in



my home. As you can see, I also included the famous Wonder Wheel also part of my collection. the others models soon to be constructed for my display are the Cyclone and Nathan's. I will be happy to share photos of the new models once built. Hopefully this year. I have been commissioned to construct a total of five Wonder Wheel models for the Vourderis family owners of Wonder Wheel park. They are great people and hope everybody who visits Coney island will always support Wonder Wheel park. Feel free to visit my website : [www.rollercoastermodels.com](http://www.rollercoastermodels.com) if you would like to see more.

**John A. Hunt**



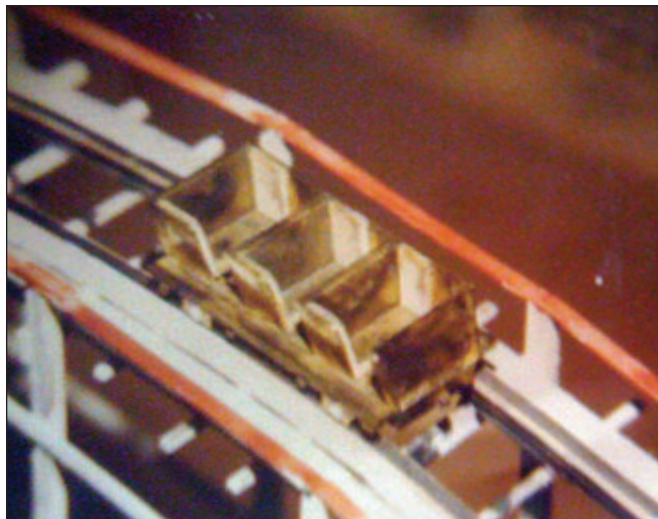


These are pictures of the Steeplechase Roller Coaster Model I built in the 70's. Since I was unable to get the plans of the coaster, I used pictures that I had taken to draw my own plan. It took several years to build.

The structure is made of basswood, and the track has side friction rails and running rails made of tin strips. The cars have running wheels and side friction wheels made of precision ball bearings. The cars, themselves, are made of brass, with lead cushions on the seats. I added the lead to the bottom of the cars to add more weight.

I am a middle school teacher, retired in June 2000 after working as an educator for 29 years. I enjoy skydiving, having made more than 4500 jumps over 30 years. Recently I've been enjoying hiking the White Mountains of NH with my wife Judy, where we have a vacation home. I also ride the Coney Island Cyclone regularly.

**Tom Gilligan**



**Regional Website:**  
[www.ACEonlineNY.org](http://www.ACEonlineNY.org)

**National Website:**  
[www.ACEonline.org](http://www.ACEonline.org)

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