

INSIDE:

Daredevil Daze 2008.....2
 Upcoming Events.....2
 Regional Guide to Ride.....3
 Mamba Turns Ten.....3
 New Members.....4
 Schlitterbahn Construction.....4

Airtime

The Official Newsletter of the American Coaster Enthusiasts Heart of America Region



Holiday Traditions

Silver Dollar City plays host to the fifth annual Coaster Christmas event.

by Jennifer Lovesee-Mast

Most ACE events are usually scheduled for warmer weather but Coaster Christmas at Silver Dollar City has always been outside the norm. Returning for the fifth go-around, the event is always held the first Saturday in December. Not surprisingly the weather is always a bit iffy. Sometimes the temperature is a balmy 60 degrees and other times it's in the 20s with snow. This year, it turned out to be a bright, sunny day with temperatures in the 40s.

Fire-in-the-Hole and **PowderKeg** were originally scheduled for morning ERT however, it turned out that both were down when we arrived. For the first time, attendees were treated to ERT on **ThuNderaTion**. Half way through our ERT, Fire-in-the-Hole was up and ready to go, so the group of 39 riders all found their way to this classic ride. This indoor roller coaster dark ride is always enjoyable in its traditional form but, for this year's event, we were treated to two unique experiences: lights on and total darkness. Riding Fire-in-the-Hole in complete darkness is an unusual sensation on any indoor ride, as there are no visual cues, forcing you to remember where the drops are by sound alone.

PowderKeg never made it up for the day, but as ERT ended groups dispersed towards **The Grand Exposition**, **The Giant Swing** or for a ride on **Wildfire** before regrouping an hour

later for lunch at The Mill.

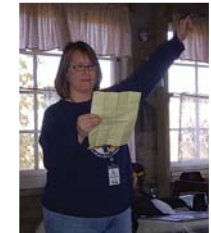
As we all trickled through the buffet line, we each had our share of Silver Dollar City's greatest attraction, its food. It's legendary and there was plenty of fried chicken, ham, mashed potatoes, green beans and more to go around. Yum!

Following lunch the annual round of presentations began. Our host park got the ball rolling. Jason Bernard, Director of Attractions for Silver Dollar City began with an introduction and Q&A session where we learned that the fate of Celebration City and the **Ozark Wildcat** are up in the air. It appears that whatever is in store for the park, the plans are to integrate the coaster into the new attraction.

Following the short Q&A session one of our region's members, Rayne Ethetton, presented a song that she had wrote about Coaster Christmas and is sung to the tune of "My Favorite Things" from *The Sound of Music*. I give her an immense level of credit for creativity, and the guts to get up and sing in front of 40 fellow enthusiasts.

After a round of applause for Rayne, Brandon Stanley from Worlds of Fun took center stage where he shared with us the construction status of **Prowler** in addition to sharing with us the renderings for the station, trains and layout.

continued on page 4



from top to bottom:
 1. The Frisco Barn all aglow.
 2. Anita Valliant proudly displays her bottle of Prowler Zinfandel.
 3. Drawing for prizes after lunch.
 4. The five-story Christmas tree.
 5. Jason Perez, Luann Ferrantelli and Larrance Brown go for another spin on ThuNderaTion.
 6. Rayne Ethetton sings about her love of Coaster Christmas.

Like their new **Evel Knievel** roller coaster, Six Flags St. Louis's acceptance of a regional ACE event came as an unexpected bonus to the 2008 coaster season to many. Our regional representatives started hinting about a possible event in late May, three weeks before the new wooden coaster from GCI opened at the eastern Missouri theme park.

Dozens of names were suggested for the event until the flier was released proclaiming that "Daredevil Daze" would be held at Six Flags St. Louis on September 13. What was most surprising was the event's registration fee; ACE members could attend the event for only \$12, regardless of whether they held a Six Flags season pass.

Over sixty people pre-registered to attend what was sure to be an exciting event. However, some out of town members found themselves in a more daring situation just traveling to the park. Hurricane Gustav struck land prior to the event, leading to some extreme weather conditions in central Missouri with lightning and inches of pouring rain. Miraculously though, Six Flags managed to stay dry through the duration of ACE's visit.

The morning started with ERT on the 1998 Premier LIM launch shuttle-coaster, **Mr. Freeze** and the brand new, \$7.5 million, Evel Knievel wooden thriller from Great Coasters International. With a whole hour of minimal waits, participants were able to get in several rides on each coaster, many trying to find which seat they liked best. At 10:00 the park opened to the general public and attendees were able to enjoy the rest of the park's rides.

In the late afternoon, ACE members gathered in the park's picnic groves, not far from Evel Knievel. Here, each attendee was greeted with a complimentary Evel Knievel pin and a raffle ticket before being shown the buffet.



DAREDEVIL DAZE

by Todd Swetnam

★★★★

Attendees are treated to an affordable day of daredevilry and fun highlighted by the addition of GCI's Evel Knievel coaster.



After a long day of walking through the park the diverse offerings of food were certainly welcome. As the group enjoyed their food, the Six Flags St. Louis President and General Manager offered interesting insight on running the park and his experiences from working for the establishment since 1972. Members walked away with their stomachs full and many with raffle prizes in their hands.

The excitement stirred up again, one hour prior to park closing when attendees were surprised with VIP treatment. Anyone wearing a Daredevil Daze badge was permitted to use the FlashPass line at Evel Knievel where one of the ride's two trains was reserved just for them. Those who were disappointed that the rookie coaster hadn't been scheduled for evening ERT were especially grateful.

At park closing, the group was treated to ERT on the park's other two wooden coasters. Those who went to **Screamin' Eagle** enjoyed a classic delight on the 1976 John Allen, hillside out-and-back. Meanwhile enthusiasts were falling in love with **The Boss**, the 2000 CCI wooden terrain coaster. In the past many had complained that the ride was too rough, however recent track work combined with nighttime speeds made for a thrilling finale to the event. During evening ERT one member was surprised with more special treatment from Six Flags. Management reunited him with his wallet that

had been lost earlier in the day.

Daredevil Daze was a great way to end the summer for coaster enthusiasts. For those that were unable to attend, be sure to mark your calendars for Saturday, June 27, 2009 as the Heart of America region plans to return to Six Flags St. Louis with another event following the conclusion of Coaster Con XXXII at Silver Dollar City and Worlds of Fun. ■

Heart of America Events:

COASTER CON XXXII
June 21, 2009 - June 26, 2009
 Silver Dollar City - Branson, MO
 Worlds of Fun - Kansas City, MO

SCHLITTERBAHN ADD-ON
June 26, 2009
 Schlitterbahn - Kansas City, KS

DAREDEVIL DAZE
June 27, 2009
 Six Flags St. Louis - Eureka, MO

COASTER CHRISTMAS
December 5, 2009 (tentative)
 Silver Dollar City - Branson, MO

National Events:

PRESERVATION CON
May 15, 2009 - May 17, 2009
 Hersheypark - Hershey, PA
 Knoebel's - Elysburg, PA

ACE ESPAÑA 2009
July 25, 2009 - August 2, 2009
 Seven Parks throughout Spain

Airtime is published for ACE members in the Heart of America region of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Southern Illinois (ACE Region #18) and is provided free of charge. Contributions of articles, photos and content are welcome and encouraged and can be sent by e-mail to Matt Laskowski at mlaskowski@aceonline.org.

To ensure that you receive the latest information from ACE including publications, newsletters, event flyers and e-updates, please validate your contact information and e-mail address online at www.AmericanCoasterEnthusiasts.com.

Guide to Ride

2009 Heart of America Edition

With the addition of Prowler to Worlds of Fun's line-up, the Heart of America region will boast 33 roller coasters (8 wood, 25 steel) at nine parks in 2009. Here's a look at where you'll find them.

ARKANSAS



X Coaster

MAGIC SPRINGS

1701 E. Grand Avenue
Hot Springs, AR 71901
Phone: (501) 318-5370
Web: www.magicsprings.com

THE COASTERS:

Arkansas Twister (1992) -
Out-and-back wooden coaster
Big Bad John (2002) -
Arrow mine train
Diamond Mine Run (2000) -
Miler family coaster
Gauntlet (2004) - Vekoma
Suspended Looping Coaster
Twist 'n' Shout (2000) -
Zamperla wild mouse
X Coaster (2006) - Maurer
Söhne looping coaster

KANSAS

ALL STAR ADVENTURES

1010 N. Webb Road
Wichita, KS 67206
Phone: (316) 682-7000
Web: www.allstar-wichita.com

THE COASTER:

Dragon Coaster - (2006)
Wisdom kiddie coaster

ZONKERS

20070 West 151st Street
Olathe, KS 66061
Phone: (913) 393-3535
Web: www.zonkers.com

THE COASTER:

Python Pit - (1997)
Indoor Miler kiddie coaster

Kansas is also home to Joyland and the region's only ACE Coaster Classic, the 1949 wooden Roller Coaster. This ride has been SBNO since 2005.

MISSOURI

CELEBRATION CITY

1383 State Highway 376
Branson, MO 65616
Phone: (417) 266-7300
Web: www.celebrationcity.com

THE COASTERS:

Jack Rabbit (2003) -
Miler family coaster
Ozark Wildcat (2003) -
Wooden twister from GCI
Thunderbolt (1999) -
Compact steel coaster

Celebration City announced in October that it will not open for the 2009 season while it looks at redevelopment options.



PowderKeg

SILVER DOLLAR CITY

399 Indian Point Road
Branson, MO 65616
Phone: (417) 338-2611
Web: www.silverdollarcity.com

THE COASTERS:

Fire-in-the-Hole (1972) -
Indoor coaster/dark ride
Grand Exposition Coaster (2006) - kiddie coaster
PowderKeg (2005) -
Air-launched steel coaster
ThuNderaTion (1993) -
Arrow mine train
Wildfire (2001) - B&M looping coaster with five inversions

ROUTE 66 CAROUSEL PARK

3834 West 7th Street
Joplin, MO 64801
Phone: (417) 626-7710
Web: route66carouselpark.com

THE COASTER:

Tiger Terror - (2002)
Wisdom kiddie coaster

MISSOURI



Scream'n' Eagle

SIX FLAGS ST. LOUIS

4900 Six Flags Road
Eureka, MO 63025
Phone: (636) 938-4800
Web: www.sixflags.com/stlouis

THE COASTERS:

Batman The Ride (1995) -
B&M inverted coaster
Boss (2000) - Wooden terrain coaster from CCI
Evel Knievel (2008) -
GCI wooden coaster
Mr. Freeze (1998) -
LIM-launched steel coaster
Ninja (1989) - Vekoma looping coaster with four inversions
River King Mine Train (1971) -
Arrow mine train
Scream'n' Eagle (1976) -
Out-and-back wooden coaster
Tony Hawk's Big Spin (2007) -
Gerstlauer spinning coaster

WORLDS OF FUN

4545 Worlds of Fun Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64161
Phone: (816) 454-4545
Web: www.worldsoffun.com

THE COASTERS:

Boomerang (2000) -
Vekoma boomerang coaster
Mamba (1998) -
Morgan hypercoaster
Patriot (2006) -
B&M inverted coaster
Prowler (2009) -
GCI wooden coaster
Spinning Dragons (2004) -
Gerstlauer spinning coaster
Timber Wolf (1989) - Summers & Dinn wooden coaster
Wacky Worm (1993) -
Pinfari kiddie coaster



Ten years ago, the addition of Mamba changed more than just the Worlds of Fun skyline.

by Jennifer Lovesee-Mast

April 18, 2008 marked the tenth anniversary of **Mamba**, and much has changed in the span of 10 years. The Worlds of Fun that many remember 10 years ago would be almost a foreign place to those of today. It was a place that, until recently, had been home to the Cotton Blossom, an Americana entrance and Victrix. Only three years had passed since Hunt Midwest sold the park and passed the torch to the new owners, Cedar Fair.

Groundbreaking happened in August 2007 and construction started with winter approaching. In the dark of night, with the industrial lights shinning, a silver behemoth was rising into the air, and we all watched as the Worlds of Fun skyline changed drastically.

We all knew this was the next big thing, no one would realize just how big Mamba would be. On April 18, 1998. Cars lined up along Worlds of Fun Avenue. People gazed up at the mammoth steel terror, with their mouths and eyes frozen wide open. No one had ever seen anything quite this size.

On opening day Mamba had no queue rails, and only one train, due to a down-to-the-wire opening. The queue line snaked (no pun intended) back to the entrance of Fury of the Nile. Several times over the season crowds thronged the park, Mamba lived up to its hype and we all truly thought that the best years were yet to come. That was not to be. Mamba was to prove its true worth by becoming MORE than the next big thing.

For all the parks failures, for all the losses, for all the less the stellar seasons, Mamba continued to bring people back, for the simple fact that it was a great ride. Over the years though it started becoming more than just a great ride; it became an icon and quickly earned a place in the hearts of the park's patrons.

Over the following years track was replaced, trains re-painted, enthusiasts argued about

continued on page 4



Regional Team



JEFF MAST
Regional Representative
jmast@aceonline.org



JASON HAZEL
Asst. Regional Representative
Kansas & Arkansas
jhazel@aceonline.org



MATT LASKOWSKI
Asst. Regional Representative
Publications/Web Site
mlaskowski@aceonline.org



JENNIFER LOVESEE-MAST
Asst. Regional Representative
Western & Southern Missouri
jlovesee@aceonline.org



GREG SCHMITZ
Asst. Regional Representative
Eastern Missouri & Illinois
gschmitz@aceonline.org

Greg is the newest member of your regional representative team. As a middle school teacher in the St. Louis area, Greg is no stranger to organizing events and assisted with planning for the Daredevil Daze event in September. Greg is a frequent visitor to Six Flags St. Louis and his favorite coasters in the region are PowderKeg and Evel Knievel. Please welcome Greg to the team.

New Members

Please welcome the following new and returning members to our region in 2008:

ILLINOIS

Nicholas Bradshaw - Metamora
Tanner Douglas, Jr. - Chenoa
Joel Hackler - Georgetown
Michael Lockwood - Champaign
Reid Siebert - Chenoa
Sheryl Siebert - Chenoa
David Thomasson - Peoria

KANSAS

Larrance Brown - Kansas City
Amy Fultz - Topeka
Steve Fultz - Topeka
Chris Knight - Kansas City

MISSOURI

Ted Abbott - Kansas City
L. Gustav Anderson - Columbia
Beth Ethelton - Richmond
Michael Ethelton - Richmond
Rayne Ethelton - Richmond
Jared Gipfert - Pleasant Hill
Maxwell Grimes - Washington
Marcela Holder - Lee's Summit
Scott Holder - Lee's Summit
Derrikk Hollon - Kirksville
James Laws - O'Fallon
DeWyane Melton - Lee's Summit

Schlitterbahn Vacation Village still scheduled to open in 2009 as work is ongoing by Jason Hazel

Work at the Schlitterbahn Vacation Village site in Kansas City, Kan. is in full swing. You can drive by the site at any time and see an army of yellow construction vehicles modifying the terrain and shaping the park. The size of the property is now much more apparent from the neighboring highway. Before the trees and roads started coming out the property was divided up into smaller sections and the army of construction equipment has made it all one in recent months.

During an October construction tour we were given a closer look at the **Torrent Tidal Wave River** that will act at the main transportation artery in the park. Unlike lazy rivers most often found in water parks, this attraction will actually serve a dual purpose. It will provide thrills with its wave generator in addition to connecting with other rivers that will then connect with numerous water slides and attractions throughout the park.



Jeffrey Siebert, Director of Corporate Communications and Sales for Schlitterbahn's water parks, said that a new structure will also be constructed soon that will allow for indoor winter water parking in addition to providing shade for the park during the hottest part of the summer.

Once complete, the new water park will be home to two Torrent Tidal Wave Rivers, two rapids rivers, seven 54-inch tube slides, three body slides, two kiddie pools, three heated pools with swim-up concession stands, two pool-to-pool chutes, six conveyers that will take riders up to the different slides while they relax in their tube and, last but not least, *five* Master Blaster water coasters.

Additional announcements are expected from the park throughout the winter and stay tuned for information regarding a Schlitterbahn add-on day to Coaster Con XXXII in June. ■

Mamba celebrates 10th anniversary (continued)

everything from Mamba's trim brakes to the color of Mamba's logo. Every spring the fans came and road Mamba first thing. Over the years bigger coasters were built at other parks, but amazingly Mamba held its own. With the loss of **Orient Express**, Mamba picked up and carried the torch as a rite of passage, terrifying new riders by its sheer size and speed.

When Mamba first opened the comparison between the the recently removed **Zambezi Zinger** and the brand new Mamba started before the first train was dispatched. At first it seemed the rides couldn't be more different. Time taught us something else though. Mamba and Zambezi Zinger were the same. Both built for speed, as years would pass both earned respect for just being pure fun and the best of their breed. Simply put, they were both rides that



people would ride over and over and over again and never get tired of riding.

Today we meet a new Worlds of Fun. Mamba is our new standby, always there, always enjoyable.

Mamba is certainly not without its problems, number one being it seems to have a unusual appetite for the polyurethane of its wheels, and boy does it run through them during the hot days of summer!

Every year though it is there like a good friend. No longer is it the premier ride, it gave that title up easily to **Patriot** in 2006. However, it is truly an extraordinary coaster and, in 10 short years, it has become impossible to imagine Worlds of Fun without it. Mamba faced the empty shoes left by its predecessor and has proven in a relatively short span of time to fill those enormous shoes with extraordinary ease. ■

Coaster Christmas at Silver Dollar City (continued)

At the conclusion of the meal the giveaways commenced and many members walked away with goodies including a weekend at Silver Dollar City, tickets to the new Schlitterbahn Vacation Village and even a bottle of Prowler-branded White Zinfandel.

The grand finale of the event was priority seating for the ever popular **Dickens' Christmas Carol** show at the Opera House and, given that the standby wait for this show can sometimes be several hours long, this was a great perk that was appreciat-

ed by many in attendance.

With night falling, some last minute shopping was to be completed before the park turned its lights on for the night. Christmastime at Silver Dollar City can only truly be experienced at night with the four million lights that blanket the park, anchored by the five-story Christmas tree. With the chilly air headed in, most of the rides were down for the night and, with the lights brightly shinning, it was a perfect end to what has become a great winter event. ■