



# Rebel Yell

The Official Newsletter of ACE Mid-Atlantic

Fall 2016 /  
Winter 2017

Photo: Invadr Construction, Jill Ryan

## Inside This Issue

- New Event Pairings for 2017
- Joining the Region's Conversation
- New Members and Spotlight
- Preparations for Coaster Con XLI
- Rollercoaster Race Raises Money
- Wintertime Event at Busch Gardens
- A Lost Relic in Southern Maryland
- A Holiday Debut Sets the Scene
- A Look Back at the Fall's Events
- What's Happening in the Region

## Connect w/ Us

- Questions? Feedback? Want to volunteer your time to help the region grow?
- Let us know by emailing us at [acemidatlantic@gmail.com](mailto:acemidatlantic@gmail.com) or find us on social media.

## Upcoming Events

The new season will begin in less than a month for most parks. As we near opening day, the Mid-Atlantic team has begun the process of creating new opportunities to cash in on this year's thrills.

### REGIONAL

We have a new, revamped lineup of events scheduled for 2017. Read about them on page four of this edition of the newsletter.

### NATIONAL

Check out the events happening nationally, including ACE's upcoming trip to Mexico.

Find out more and register online!

[www.acemidatlantic.org](http://www.acemidatlantic.org)  
[www.aceonline.org](http://www.aceonline.org)

The beauty of a wooden coaster in the process of being built is on showcase in this picture of *Invadr*.



## Mixing It Up for the Region

### Tried and True Regional Events Get a Refresher

ACE Mid-Atlantic has been going strong for many years. With an eclectic collection of regional parks and family fun centers and, arguably, one of the top boardwalks on the east coast, there is no question as to why our events are looked forward to each year.

For those traveling through the region, catching a first ever ride on *Intimidator 305*, watching an award winning stunt show at Six Flags America, or just hanging out in the lazy river at each of our waterparks is an experience within itself. It gives the participant an appreciation for the varied experiences our region can offer in such close proximity. Each of the three major parks (Six Flags America, King's Dominion, and Busch Gardens

Williamsburg) are less than a few hours away from each other, meaning that there is never a dull moment to be had on the road. Add in the smaller, lesser known parks adjacent to these big three and a blueprint of fun begins to develop.

Yes, this very notion of a shared ecosystem allows us to plan some great events throughout the year. We're able to aim for at least one major event for almost every month the parks are open for the regular season. We like to think it's our ultimate way to have fun and provide members, both familiar and passing through, the opportunity to experience something fantastic.

*Continued on Page 3*



## From the Backseat

### Elizabeth Ringas

I love taking a moment to reflect on the amusement park fun that was had during the 2016 season. It truly was a year to remember. When I think about the upcoming season, I cannot believe it is here. This year marks my 12th outing as your regional representative and each one I've helmed has been amazing in its own way (some harder than others).

We as a region have impacted so many lives. We are not just about riding coasters, but making a difference in the future. We made 2016 about inviting friends to experience ACE and we, as a result, welcomed many new faces to events. For 2017, the theme is about re-evaluation for our region. We have so many new members on our leadership team and want to incorporate their fresh ideas. Two that we are already incorporating: an advisory group and a restructuring to our event calendar.

I invite you, as a member, to join this fresh conversation in the advisory group. What does that involve? A willingness to read and respond to an email streamed conversation and an occasional conference call. These conversations give us the opportunity to find new ideas for our region, but also the pleasure of planning all the add-ons and extras for CoasterCon 2018! We get to focus solely on being the hospitality team!

I am excited to lead our region through the next two years with new rides, fresh ideas and CoasterCon XLI.

# Creating New Friendships

## New Members for This Period and Opening Day WAVES

Whenever we get new members, we always like to celebrate. All of us are like a big family, one that likes to have fun. In honor of creating new friendships, we'd like to acknowledge the new recruits for the period. If you run into any of these individuals at the next ACE event or WAVE (see below), feel free to introduce yourself.

Alex Torop  
Virginia Beach, VA

Robert Weathers  
Williamsburg, VA

Mark Adams  
Windsor, VA

Kaitlyn Gardy  
Williamsburg, VA

Matthew Oliver  
Columbia, MD

Erin Pursel  
Winchester, VA

Cassie Coffey  
Midlothian, VA

Mike Basko  
Salisbury, MD

Amanda Ellinger  
Roanoke, VA

Even Lilley  
Chesapeake, VA

Joseph Zolnai  
Midlothian, VA

What's a WAVE, you ask? It's our informal way of meeting up to open the area parks. Join us on each of these days to ride with fellow coaster enthusiasts.

### BG Passholder Day - March 18th (Silver, Gold, and Platinum Passholders)

## Coaster Con XLI

### Prepping for the Return Home

In 1977, a few people had the crazy idea to gather together at King's Dominion for the filming of the movie Rollercoaster. While marathoning the coasters there, a new organization was formulating in the heads of these individuals, a passionate group who shared the love and thrill of the traditional rollercoaster. Chatter began and a year later this initial idea would form into what we have loved and known for over forty years: American Coaster Enthusiasts.

Officially forming in 1978 at Busch Gardens Williamsburg (then the Old Country), ACE was born and so was its quintessential event: Coaster Con. As the event celebrates its 40th anniversary at the San Antonio area theme parks this summer, the event is coming home for the fourth time in its history for 2018.

Coaster Con XLI will once again be hosted at the two parks that started it all while showcasing the many other parks that make up our region. Even greater, Coaster Con XLI will feature a number of great parks that will be just off the heels of a

**only; Fun Cards are not valid for admission)**

Meet to the right of the entrance to *Tempesto* at 11:00 am.

### BG Opening Day - March 25th

Meet to the right of the entrance to *Apollo's Chariot* at 11:30 am.

### KD Passholder Preview Night - March 24th (5 - 9pm)

Meet at the ACE Landmark sign outside *Rebel Yell* at 6:30 pm.

### KD Opening Day - March 25th

Meet to the left of entrance to the *Dinosaur Alive* store (that leads to *Grizzly* also) at 11:30am.

### Six Flags America - April 1st

Watch Facebook and your ACE email blast for a special invitation and mark your calendars to be at Six Flags America on April 1st!

some major innovations. Busch Gardens Williamsburg will be celebrating their second year of *Invader*, the first ever wooden coaster for the park. King's Dominion, although not saying much at this point, will most likely have some type of conversion done of *Hurler*. Six Flags America has been doing well in expanding its lineup and the ~250 foot Skyflyer they're putting in for 2017 will still be fresh and new for 2018.

On top of that, other parks are sure to surprise us with new things, so who knows what the likes of Adventure Park USA, Trimpers, or even Central Park Funland may have in store for us.

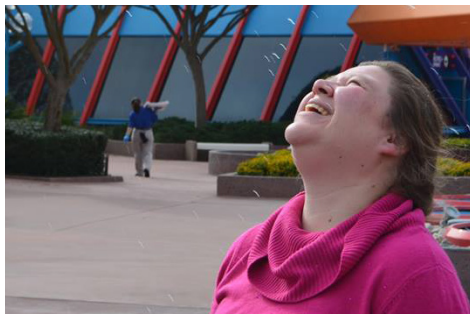
We couldn't be more excited to host the event in our region and we look forward to welcoming attendees from all over the country. This event will be huge and, as such, we are always looking for people to help. Keep an eye out on our Facebook page for opportunities to assist during our preparations for Coaster Con XLI.



# Who Is ACE?

## Member Spotlight

We've mentioned before that coaster riding is much more fun when you ride with a partner. In an effort to introduce the many great people that make up the Mid-Atlantic region, we're going to highlight our volunteers, members, and regional rep team each quarter.



**Name:** Becky Brown

**Role:** Member

**Location:** Sterling, VA

**How long have you been a member?**

~7 years

**What's your favorite coaster?**

My favorite coaster is a bit tricky. I'm not sure I could narrow it down to just one. I love *Batman the Ride* at Fiesta Texas, *Thunderbird*, *White Lightning*. My local favorite is probably *Alpengeist*; however, *Volcano* and *Superman* are a close second.

**What got you into this hobby?**

I rode coasters with my dad, and various other people then I met up with Bob Ziems and Nathan Brown.

**What do you love about ACE?**

My favorite thing about ACE is the camaradery and the gatherings. It's so much more fun to see people you know at the parks.

**What do you like to do besides going to amusement parks?**

Notable interests include: playing hand bells and flute, camping, garden and cooking.

*Mixing it Up - Continued from Page 1*

To further cement that very pleasing idea, we've gone ahead and tightened up our event schedule to help us showcase everything the region can offer in one season. We've reworked some events to be paired with a smaller park, while



**Name:** John Salzberg

**Role:** Member

**Location:** Washington, D.C.

**How long have you been a member?**

Joined ACE in 2012.

**What's your favorite coaster?**

*Leviathan* (Canada's Wonderland)

**What got you into this hobby?**

My wife and I bumped into two ACE members at Busch Gardens in 2011 while riding *Apollo's Chariot* in freezing rain. They were a lot of fun and we were the only riders for about an hour. So we signed up the next year for a six month trial membership and that was all she wrote

**What do you love about ACE?**

The fact that the organization should actually be called American Buffet Enthusiasts. I've never seen people move so quickly and efficiently through a food line - it's a thing of beauty.

**What do you like to do besides going to amusement parks?**

I enjoy good craft beer, reading, struggling to make plants grow in a community garden, and talking to people from all walks of life.

others were given a new chance to shine. Fret not, we did leave some old favorites untouched -- we feel like the new approach will be great for everyone, including those new to our region.



**Name:** Charles Mann

**Role:** Member

**Location:** Lynchburg, VA

**How long have you been a member?**

Joined ACE in 2003.

**What's your favorite coaster?**

*Mindbender* at Six Flags Over Georgia

**What got you into this hobby?**

My mother would tell you that I am a roller coaster enthusiasts because of her riding the Rebel Yell while pregnant with me in 1976. Our family vacations always seemed to revolve around baseball and amusement parks growing up. It was a foregone conclusion that this hobby would play a major role in my life.

**What do you love about ACE?**

It's an all volunteer organization that has so many passionate members that want to expand the appreciation of a family tradition.

**What do you like to do besides going to amusement parks?**

I have always been a huge Chicago Cubs fan and 2016 has been totally unbelievable.

Check out these upcoming events on the next page and let us know what you think by emailing us at [acemidatlantic@gmail.com](mailto:acemidatlantic@gmail.com).

# Upcoming ACE Events

A Slew of Events to Keep You Riding All Year Long

## Mid-Atlantic

### Mountainfest at Wisp Mountain Alpine Coaster (Sunday, March 5th)

Our yearly event at the only location in the region with an alpine coaster. Come out to experience the beauty of controlling your own speed on the rails.

### Opening Day WAVes at Region Parks (Late March, Early April)

Join us as we go around the region, opening each park with a set of informal takeovers on the most popular rides. Check out page two of this newsletter for more information.

### Go Karts Plus in Williamsburg, VA (Friday, June 2nd) and ACE Dives at Busch Gardens Williamsburg (Saturday, June 3rd)

As a part of our new pairing initiative for this year's events, we are giving you a double dose of Williamsburg fun. Join us as we race cars by night and ride coasters by day.

### Oceanfest in Ocean City, MD (July)

The boardwalk comes alive on the beaches of Maryland during our summer Oceanfest. Check out Trimper's which includes some historic dark rides that can't

be found anywhere else.

### Celebrate America at Six Flags America [Celebrating Wild One's 100th Birthday!] (Saturday, August 26th) and Wild West Fun Day at Adventure Park USA (Sunday, August 27th)

Another one of our new pairings, we've moved our popular fall event Celebrate America into late summer so that we can showcase it with one of the fastest rising family-centered parks in Maryland.

### Fall Thrillfest at Kings Dominion (Saturday, October 14th) and Central Park Funland (Sunday, October 15th)

Our third and final pairing for the year includes a stop over in central Virginia for two days of fun at each of these spots.

### Holiday In the Park at Six Flags America (Saturday, December 2nd)

We've decided to nix Coastin' through the Snow this year in favor of showcasing Holiday in the Park which was quite impressive for it's inaugural showcase in 2016. Expect an expanded assortment of light displays and shows to enjoy.

## National

### ACE South of the Border in Mexico (April 19 - April 22)

ACE is going international! This year, we've planned a trip to the heart of Mexico to enjoy some of the best rides the country has to offer. Stops include Six Flags Mexico, Bosque Magico, Perimágico, and more.

### ACE Preservation Conference

National's spring event will be held in the south this year, offering stints at Alabama Splash Adventure, Lake Winnepesaukah, and Six Flags Over Georgia. Numerous wooden coasters are a part of ERT so don't miss the opportunity to try them out.

### Coaster Con XL

As we mentioned in our article about Coaster Con XLI, this yearly event is the one most members look forward to all season long. Texas will be the target for ACE as we descend upon Six Flags Fiesta Texas, Sea World San Antonio, and ZDT's Amusement Park.

### ACE Summer Conference

End the summer season with trips to Valleyfair! and Arnolds Park. This duo might be in the lesser traveled areas of the country, but they still provide a nice collection of thrills. As always, ERT will surely be included so you can get your credits in.

# Racing for a Cause

## Fun at Six Flags America Raises

## Funds - Article by Sam Marks

(Alexandria, VA)

On Sunday, October 16, my husband and I participated in the Roller Coaster Race at Six Flags America. The race, an event for charity, included 5K and 10K variations, with awards available at the finish line for those who completed them. Over 300 people signed up and ran in each of these races. We participated in the rider portion of the race which had over 130 participants.

After arriving just before 11am, we checked in and then changed into our t-shirts. We got our wristbands and off we went. Each ride had a crew member with a paper puncher to punch holes in our wristbands, documenting each successful spin on a coaster. After three rides on *Superman* we took a walk to *Jokers Jinx* to get our credit there. We then got three rides on *The Wild One* before heading over to *Apocalypse* and *Roar*.

At each coaster, some of the lead ops were cheering us on and *The Wild One* crew was superior in their enthusiasm and worked hard to get the trains loaded and dispatched as quick as possible. They were even mentioning to the guests not participating that they too could participate but needed to head out to the tent outside the park to sign up! Once we were finished, we met other ACERs for lunch. Our official mileage for the day was over seven on coasters alone, which is more than 10K. So I guess we did well!

It should be noted that the route the runners followed took them into areas of the park that aren't normally seen by guests including the back area behind Batwing and Superman where old ride parts are tossed. They also went through some of the Hall Manor grounds, and a portion of the Fright Fest trail. They also ran through the waterpark and many other portions of the park.

All in all, I was proud to participate in the event and designate all my money to the National Roller Coaster Museum.





Our traditional holiday shot at the Coastin' through the Snow event at Busch Gardens.

Photo: Group Shot, ACE Mid-Atlantic

## Coastin' Once Again

**ACE Event - Coastin' Through the Snow at Busch Gardens Williamsburg**

**Article by Jennifer Bock (Washington, D.C.)**

It was a bright and sunny day for our event at Christmastown. We started off the full-filled day with ERT on *Verbolten*. We rode again and again making sure we experienced all three scenes inside the ride and delighted in the surprised screams on newcomers that have never ridden before. I brought two friends of mine that had never been to Christmastown and it was fun to see the park through new eyes.

Once ERT was over, it was time for the midway game tournament at Santa's Rooftop Race. Players had two chances to hit the target with the water gun to move Santa to the chimney top first. Each round's winners battled head-to-head until we had an ultimate champion! After the game was over a few ACERs ran down to *Tempesto* (which was not open in previous Christmastown years) to get a ride in before lunch and before the crowds arrived. It was nice to have a second coaster open this year.

Lunch was at the Black Forrest Picnic Pavilion behind Das Festhaus. The pavilion was tented to keep us warm and decorated festively with fancy tablecloths, Christmas garlands and a faux fireplace. Lunch did not disappoint with turkey and fixings, a ham carving station, clam chowder served in a bread bowl and a host of desserts to choose from. Regional Rep., Elizabeth Ringas, welcomed us and prizes were handed out.

We were surprised by a visit from none other than Cookie Monster donning a Santa hat and striped scarf. What a fun photo-op! We were also visited by Park President, David Cromwell who talked about how Busch Gardens is the largest light display in North America with 8.2 million lights and that a ride on the train would provide us with a nice peek of the *InvadR* construction site (guess where we were heading next). After lunch we met up for the group photo in front of the Christmas tree in Germany where the final prize of a Busch Gardens rollercoaster tour for two was handed out.

Next up, getting on that train for a sneak peek before the sun went down. Many ACERs joined as we boarded Busch Gardens Railway at the Tweedside Train Station in New France. We made our way around the park with great anticipation. As the conductor announced we'd be slowing down due to speed restrictions in the construction zone, cheers could be heard from the train. We had some great views of the coaster under construction and can't wait to ride it next year.

We had some free time before our VIP seating for *Scrooge No More* and people spread-out to enjoy the park's many shows, rides and 8.2 million lights before meeting up again. Christmastown is truly a magical place and it is always great fun to celebrate the season with ACE friends.

*Continued on Next Page*



Photo: Lunch, Sam Marks



Photo: Midway Game, Jill Ryan



Photo: Train Ride, Jill Ryan



Photo: InvadR, Jill Ryan



And what did those first timers I mention think of Christmastown and our event: "This was our first time at Christmas Town at Busch Gardens, and it was a blast! ACE made my husband and I feel right at home, teaching us about the coasters and giving us the inside scoop on all the live shows.

Holiday lunch in the Black Forest was a

highlight: not only did we get to meet the park president, but we also got our photo taken with Cookie Monster!" Maybe we can get them to come next year too!

*Coastin' through the Snow will be taking a hiatus in 2017, however we'll have another great holiday event for Six Flag's Holiday in the Park.*



Photo: Lighted Tree, ACE Mid-Atlantic

## Chesapeake Beach

### The Lost But Not Forgotten Seaside Resort

ACE, at its core, is about preserving Americana, in particular the wooden rollercoaster. The experience of riding one, especially a coaster classic (our designation of a small, rare breed of surviving coasters that have not been modified in any way -- see our qualifications on the ACE website) is a time honored tradition that we'd like to keep.

Unfortunately, that is not always the case and, despite our best efforts, we cannot save them all. Time has the last word on a great deal of things and, in the case of these wooden behemoths we admire dearly, we've lost a great deal of them (and their associated parks) over the years.

Yet, in light of this sobering reality, we still preserve their memory indefinitely through knowledge and education. We continuously teach new generations about a time when wood was king and the earliest of rollercoasters could be found by the hundreds coast to coast.

This is no more true than Chesapeake Beach, a bygone seaside resort that housed some of the greatest attractions in the area for more than seventy-five years. Much like Glen Echo (another park lost, yet preserved), Chesapeake Beach was a tourist destination for locals in the Washington D.C. and Baltimore areas, a getaway from the hustle and bustle of the post-century America, sitting ready at the whim for guests to come relax and enjoy at their leisure.

Situated on the western shorelines of Southern Maryland, the region was served by steamboats and railroads that brought people to the lavish seaside resort. Like any good version of a turn-of-the-century beach vacation, visitors were allowed to partake in a boardwalk stroll, swirl around on the Dentzel-designed carousel, or nap in the exclusive Belvedere Hotel.

Those looking for a more exhilarating experience, the resort also offered a dancing pavilion (bandstand) featuring some of the best traveling entertainment acts of the day. Performing bears, games of chance, and concession stands completed the picture of a hopping and thriving community.

The cherry on top was a wooden coaster, named *The Great Derby* that sat situated over the boardwalk and the water. Like many wooden rollercoasters that began popping up fast and furious in the early 20th century, little is known about its builder or its statistics. However, we do know that it was built (by some records -- see below) in 1916 and operated for at least a decade. It was considered one of the latest and greatest in the area during this time and was a focal point for many individuals who visited the area.

*There may or may not have been a second coaster that operated before The Great Derby dominated the shoreline of Chesapeake Beach. When the resort opened up in 1900, scenic railways, some of the first ever built rollercoasters were already popular. These switchback style rollercoasters would be the grounding that would eventually take the wooden coaster into a feverishly redefined experience with each passing year. Some sources point out that the Great Derby was the original coaster that opened with the resort, however that most likely isn't the case. As with many coasters of this era, this discrepancy (i.e. lost details) is one of the reasons we strive to preserve the knowledge for future generations.*

The park and area would be a top spot up until the late 20's, when a series of changing circumstances starting to slow down the growth of the resort. Between a fire that burned the Belvedere down in 1923 and the rising prevalence of automobiles that took travelers to other beaches, the park was quickly becoming a bygone attraction. By

the start of the great depression, the park was recording low numbers of visitors. Just like that, the rails that once were the only means of reaching this fabled place slowly began to come up and the last train that took visitors sometime in 1935 was the nail in the coffin that signaled the end of an era.

Or was it? As the resort began to fade away from people's memories, the town that had flourished in its wake survived to go through many different iterations. Casinos and other forms of gambling would dominate its landscape while the remaining amusement park rides would be refurbished and flourish for another three decades. An eventual change of recreational habits closed the park for good in 1972, however the town continued to be a spot for people looking for a quick and easy weekend getaway.

If one goes to visit the area now, they will find a radically, yet familiar landscape. Gone are the amusement park rides, replaced with real estate and fast food chains situated on a lightly sea breezing pier that conjures up the same smells that someone three generations ago would have easily smelt too. A trip over to the museum documenting the changing tides of the area will grant you a chance to view the remaining relics, slowly collected and restored for preservation.

We always encourage people to visit places like Chesapeake Beach and Glen Echo. They tell of a past that built the foundations of what we often take for granted today. If it wasn't for the early pioneers of seaside resorts, traveling carnivals, or any of the other entertainment venues that entrepreneurs had in their minds, we wouldn't have a still thriving ecosystem of amusement parks that have housed the many innovations we continue to enjoy.



Lights were on display everywhere, including the saloon which housed one of the holiday shows.

# Holiday in the Park Shines

## ACE Event - Informal Meet-up at Six Flags America

Six Flags America has done a lot over the years to improve the park in numerous ways. From hiring talented actors to keep their stunt show as one of the best in the nation, to annually repairing and refurbishing their wooden coasters to ensure they last forever in a world where we seemingly keep losing them, the park seems to have their plans well developed to get the small place back on the map.

That's why we were pleased when we learned that Six Flags America would be one of the parks that would be getting Holiday in the Park for 2017. Taking all the best qualities management has accomplished over the years and fitting it into a tight, neat little package with a bow for six weeks in the winter seemed like a winner.

To celebrate the occasion, enthusiasts were invited to join each other for an informal event at the park. Members arrived early to get some afternoon rides on *The Wild One*, taking its quick dips and turns in the brisk winter air. Others who needed to warm up first took in the hot chocolate and other sweets being offered for the season.

After rides and food, many got in line for a VIP showing of the new holiday musical. This show, a spirited take on the meaning of Christmas and family, was well done,

with a talented cast of five who sung their heart out, rivaling some of the other area park's shows.

After being warmed in the theatre, many made their way over to the stunt show arena where they were able to see the antics of the season with a cast that combined Krampus and other villains with two elves on a quest to destroy Santa's naughty list. After the show, many were hungry, so they made their way to the house to dine on holiday favorites while others decided to get a few cold, yet refreshing rides on *Roar*.

As the night began to darken, the lights began to shine as friends and families watched the displays of the season while also enjoying the many hot spots that were set up, including some gas powered fire pits.

For being a first year event, you can tell Six Flags America put their heart and soul into it, creating an atmosphere that many will get to enjoy next year.

*In an attempt to show just how much this event and park are growing, we've decided to give Holiday in the Park the chance to be our wintertime event, as we give Christmas Town a rest.*

Photo: Holiday Lights, Robert Ziem



Photo: Holiday Musical, Robert Ziem



Photo: Holiday Stunt Show, Robert Ziem



Photo: Wild One ITOT, Robert

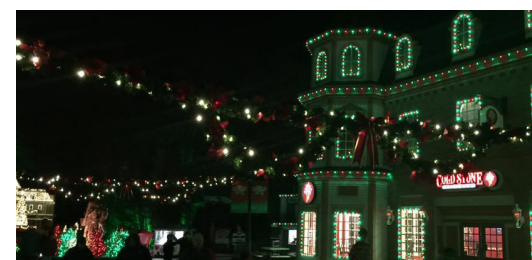


Photo: Holiday Lights, Robert Ziem



Mischievous and frightful pumpkins greeted us for Fall Thrillfest. *Dominator*, the only floorless coaster in the region sits in the back, primed and ready for members.



Photo: Fall Thrillfest Check-in, Jill Ryan



Photo: Rebel Yell ERT, Sam



Photo: Blackout Maze Walk-through, Sam Marks



Photo: S'mores, ACE Mid-Atlantic



Photo: Midway Game, Jill Ryan

## A Fall Weekend of Fun

ACE Events - Virginia State Fair, Fall Thrillfest at King's Dominion and Celebrate America at Six Flags America

### Virginia State Fair

As we stated in our previous issue, the state fair (and by extension, the county) is an often overlooked place to get some of the best thrills -- simply put, it's the misunderstood, often older cousin to the well known parks of the country. To counter this mindset, we held an informal event at the Virginia State Fair, during its last weekend of operation and the night before our traditional day of fun at King's Dominion next door.

The forecast had been gloomy all day as rain continuously pounded the area, drenching the grounds and making for a soggy experience upon arrival. Attendees were asked to meet up with assistant regional representative, Corey Brown shortly after six. Due to the conditions, not many showed up. However the small, yet eager group that did braved the rain so they could enjoy the many things the state fair has to offer.

First on the docket was finding some food. After walking around looking at the many choices available, the group settled on the fried seafood stand near the midway entrance, giving us a jolt of protein to take on the rides.

At this point in the night, the midway was slowly starting to fill in as we noticed the rain had stopped altogether. Lights from the towering rides began to shine and shimmer, giving us the full experience one needs to enjoy the carnival.

Needing our coaster fix (there's never a time we don't need it), we made our way over to the ticket booth and purchased our fast-pass for a ride on the fair's small, yet sizable rollercoaster: a portable wild mouse -- a relocated piece that used to sit at Myrtle Beach Pavilion before it closed down.

Strapped in and ready to go, we were surprised at the ferocity of it. The turns were sharp and speedy and the drops were slick and quick. We all agreed it was one of the better wild mouse rides we've had in a while.

After being knocked around, we decided more food was to be had (ACE members love their food) so we made our way back to the cornucopia of stands to find some coveted fried deserts. We happened upon a stand where the owner chatted it up with us, giving us some recommendations.

Our selection? Pop tarts, oreos, and other junk food, drenched and bathed in funnel

*Continued on Next Page*



cake lather. We chowed down on the beignet inspired goodness before we started to feel the food coma kick in.

Realizing we only had a few hours to spare and a need to not fall asleep on the bench (really, those fried goods were rich), we decided to walk off the food we just devoured, checking out the many agricultural offerings the state fair has to offer, including goats, horses, and ginormous pumpkins.

As the night started to die down, we made our way back to the entrance. We often think of amusement parks as the sole way to have fun, but as we found out at the Virginia State Fair, you can pack quite a bit into a short night and less than stellar weather.

## Fall Thrillfest

It's hard to find a day when it's not raining at Fall Thrillfest. Over a period of three years, we have been met with cold days, and drizzles in the forecast. After being drenched in a hurricane that popped up unexpectedly in 2015, we thought we'd have to start calling this event Wetfest.

Praying to the coaster gods for at least one year where we would not have to deal with the messy, yet oddly pleasing viscosity of oil and water on our backwood *Grizzly* rides, they heard our call and dried up the previous night's rain, leaving a day that was refreshingly crisp.

The day started off with some rides on *Intimidator 305* as *Volcano* ended up closing for the morning due to unforeseen maintenance. This didn't slow down ACE members as many partook in extra rides on *I-305* which was dispatching rides at a slick pace. Many easily got close to a dozen rides before the general public began pouring in.

After ERT, ACE members were able to do what they liked before meeting up mid-morning for our obligatory midway game. On the docket was a water gun contest, with some fierce competition among the group.

This year's luncheon was presided over by King Dominion's new general manager, Gary Chadwick, who teased with us some of the things that may or may not be coming

to the park, while also giving us a taste of his priorities for the park. Five ACE members also bid on and won some unique coaster memorabilia including full size banners.

After chowing down on pulled pork and chicken, the group was offered a backstage tour of *Intimidator 305* and *Rebel Yell* which provided unique views of each coaster that are otherwise impossible to get. Many stopped to watch the cable lift motor do its thing which roared and spun as riders climbed 300 feet into the air.

As the skies darkened in the early evening, we were given a backstage tour of the new Haunt maze, *Trick or Treat*, which was so elaborately decorated, many took numerous pictures to capture it all. It allowed for us to be even more impressed when the group went through it again with scare actors and lights off.

To top off the night, we were given a special nighttime ERT session on *Rebel Yell*. The racing coaster which is a fan favorite and the very place ACE got its start forty years ago, was on fire as the coaster rushed through the darkness. To complete the experience, our two train operation was paired up with the other side hauling the general public, offering some fierce and close races right down to the finish line.

As riders stayed in their seats to get another ride during the two hour ERT, we were treated to some s'mores that were hot and melty on the chilly evening -- the perfect accompaniment. After ERT, ACE Members still had a solid three and a half hours to enjoy the park before it closed.

Despite the long day, Fall Thrillfest is always one of our most popular events and this year was no exception. We couldn't have asked for a better (and drier) day to ride our favorites, and we look forward to what the park can offer us in 2017.

## Celebrate America

The Halloween season always brings the Mid-Atlantic to Six Flags America for our annual Celebrate America event. This year seventy-four ACE members and their guests joined us on Sunday, October 1st. A buffet of Italian sausage, salad bar, and roasted chicken greeted us along with

amazing door prizes donated by Six Flags America including pieces from *Superman Ride of Steel* like wheels and other park memorabilia.

During our picnic, the entire management staff joined us for a question and answer session about everything from operations to merchandising to food service. As lunch concluded, we enjoyed a visit from two Frightfest characters and two Looney Toons characters dressed ready for the Halloween celebration. They joined in our group pictures.

Following lunch, a small group was able to enjoy a backstage tour of the makeup area where all preparations and costuming happens for Frightfest. Managers explained about the process and the training that characters go through to ensure a safe and frightful Halloween experience throughout the season.

As late afternoon approached, all attendees headed into reserved seating at three consecutive shows - *Rise of the Occult: A Stunt Massacre*, *Romano's Theater of Magic* (Joe Romano's final season), and *The Awakening* -- to kick off the Frightfest festivities. Following the Awakening show, we enjoyed front of the line access to two of the Frightfest mazes.

As the park closed for the night, all gathered for ERT on *The Wild One* where we enjoyed non-stop rides for almost an hour.

What fun it was to see the Six Flags staff so involved and focused on offering an amazing experience for us! Thank you to Six Flags America for a jam packed experience including just about every aspect of the park and Frightfest.

*Fall Thrillfest will be coupled with Central Park Funland next year, while Celebrate America will be moved to the summertime and be paired with Adventure Park USA. We hope to provide an opportunity for members to experience the Virginia State Fair again in the future, however it's all based on the timing and availability of event dates.*

ACE Mid-Atlantic members who attended Eastcoaster, the offseason event that is full of surprises, stopped for a group shot, with *Skyrush* towering in the backdrop.



## Around the Region and Back

### Hard Hat Tour

As *Invadr* nears completion, Busch Gardens is offering the ability for area enthusiasts to take a tour. Winners of their Hard Hat Tour Sweepstakes will be able to tour the work site and see unique perspectives of the coaster before it opens to the public in the spring.

### Invadr Gets a Second Tunnel

Busch Gardens announced that the ride will receive a second tunnel near the beginning of the ride. This second element should turn a fast and furious ride into an even better experience, as a well placed headchopper always pleases.

### Avalanche, Twenty-nine Years a Relic

One of the only three remaining steel bobsled coasters in America has officially hit the prime age of 29. As it nears full adulthood, the coaster continues to be a favorite among families and parkgoers. While Mack still makes this model of coaster, King's Dominion can still boast, for now, as the only place in the Mid-Atlantic to get this unique experience (aside from *Flying Turns*, which sits in a category all its own).

### Volcano Gets a Refreshed Sign

*Volcano* has been one of the region's

favorite ride since it debuted in the mid-90s. With wait times easily reaching two hours on the most popular days, it's a no brainer that King's Dominion would put some work into making the iconic sign shine once more. Look out for it when the park opens up on March 25.

### Rehabbed Trains

Six Flags America has sent their trains once again to Philadelphia Toboggan Company, Inc. to be refurbished for the new season. The park has done a wonderful job in maintaining their wooden coasters and the freshened trains should look great for *The Wild One's* 100th birthday.

### Wonder Woman Breaks Ground

Six Flags has begun to break ground for *Wonder Woman*. It will be situated next to *Superman*. Expect for it to open by Memorial Day.

### Adventure Park's New Plans?

The park has posted a video showing the park getting a rehab to its buildings, with the tagline 'there are big changes coming' and the hashtags #ThursdayThought #ThinkBig. What do they have up their sleeve? We're just as curious and stumped as you. We'll have

## ACE Mid-Atlantic Team

### Regional Representative

Elizabeth Ringas

### Assistant Regional Representatives

Jennifer Bock

Corey Brown

Bill Galvin

John Mellott

Evangelos Ringas

Vanessa Thomas

### Paper Registrations

Billy Tyson

### Regional Archivist

Shannon Somerville

### Website Management

Wesley Friend

### About the Organization

American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) is a non-profit organization with nearly 7000 members in the United States and more than a dozen other countries. The mission of ACE is to create fellowship among its members, promote the continued operation of roller coasters and to continue to foster and promote the conservation, appreciation, knowledge, and enjoyment of the classic wooden roller coaster and the contemporary steel roller coaster.